



ASPECTS OF BENGALI SOCIETY

FROM OLD BENGALI LITERATURE

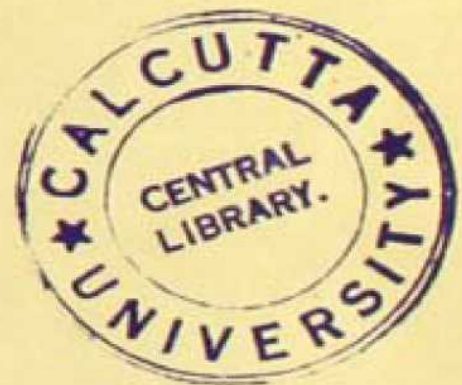
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FOREWORD

If Sir Asutosh Mookerjee, whose patronage and inspiration is really at the back of Mr. Das Gupta's monograph, "Aspects of Bengali Society from Old Bengali Literature," had been alive, he would be pleased, I am sure, to introduce it to the reading public as a specimen of the research-work which might be expected from the younger generation of scholars, if they were given proper facilities and scopes. Mr. Das Gupta and his colleague Mr. Manindramohan Bose were appointed in 1921 as two Research Assistants to work in the Department of Indian Vernaculars under the guidance of Prof. Dineschandra Sen, Mr. Das Gupta being selected for collecting the data of social history of Bengal from our old Bengali Literature.

I need not remind the reader of the fact that the treasures of our old Bengali Literature lay completely buried, their existence being almost forgotten, before Rai Bahadur Prof. Sen made it his life-work to unearth and appraise them for what these were worth, and accomplish with consummate energy the task commenced and inspired by the pioneers of whom MM. Prof. Hara Prasad Sastri ranks foremost. Prof. Sen's *Vāṅga-Bhāṣā-o-Sāhitya* or its amplified English version, "The History of Bengali Language and Literature," consisting of a series of lectures delivered in English at the University of Calcutta as the Ramtana Lahiri Research Fellow, is a great classic that we Bengalis can boast of in respect of our own literature. How long as yet Prof. Sen's masterpiece will hold the field is beyond what I can say.

There are signs of new awakening, indicative, no doubt, of new currents of research that are likely to set in with the dawn of a new era. Even accepting Prof. Sen's classic as the final and finished product in the history of the literary appreciation of our old Bengali works, it was easy to find that there were certain definite lines of enquiry whereby Prof. Sen's researches might be supplemented. And it is acting partly by the suggestions from Prof. Sen himself that Mr. Das Gupta as one of his Research Assistants was called upon to undertake this particular line of work.

The eleven quarterly instalments of work filling the present (XIVth) volume of the University Journal of Letters and those that are to appear in the next volume can be treated, I believe, as a clear evidence of Mr. Das Gupta's fitness to pursue the line of enquiry for which he was chosen.

In reading through the following pages, it seems to me that the materials have been judiciously selected and properly distributed into different chapters. I think Mr. Das Gupta has done well not launching upon an ambitious scheme. There is no attempt anywhere; I may say to his credit, at overvaluing or undervaluing the historical importance of the occasional allusions and references in our ancient serious and folk literature to certain details of our social life, religious feelings and various activities. I understand, the ground covered by Mr. Das Gupta's researches does not extend beyond the early Mahomedan Period. He confines his line of investigation to Bengal's literary works, leaving the wider issues for the historian to give his verdict upon.

It is perhaps too early to venture upon a systematic account of the social life of Bengal. The few works that yet survive cannot be supposed to represent the social manners and customs as these prevailed in all parts of Bengal during any known period of time. The manners and customs and the general ways of the people must have been different in different parts, among different tribes, castes and communities.

There is a clear evidence to show that as early as the sixth century B. C. Bengal was a tract of land which lay outside Aryandom. When Bengal came to be included within Aryandom is not difficult to ascertain. One can make bold to say that according to the limits of the Aryavarta as defined in the Manu Samhitā and by the time this authoritative text on Hindu law and morality was compiled in its present shape, *i.e.*, during the second century B. C., Bengal came to be clearly recognised as the most eastern portion of Aryandom. No other meaning than this can be made out from the significant expression "as regards the east and west, the Aryandom extended from sea to sea." The Eastern or South-eastern limit of the Mid-land as defined in a *śloka* of the Manu Samhitā did not extend at one time beyond Prayāg or Allahabad. As appears from the description of the Mid-land in the older Pali

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texts, its south-eastern limit did not extend beyond Gayā, Champā and the Muzaffarpur District.

Bodh-Gayā was known to be the jungle of Uruvilva on the bank of the Nairanjanā—a tributary of the Phalgu river. Beyond the Uruvilva forest in the further east, there was the “Vaṅgānta-janapada,” evidently a jungle tract of land inhabited by savage hunters. It is here that Upaka—the Ājīvika ascetic—fell in love with Chāpā, the daughter of a savage hunter. Gayā, as we learn from the Sūchiloma Sutta and its commentary, was known to be a holy place, visited annually by a large number of pilgrims who came there for ablutions in a tank, as well as to make offerings at the old-world shrine of which the tutelary deities were two Yakshas, Sūchiloma and Khaṛa by name. The Phalgu also was known to be famous as a sacred river where people came to bathe for purification.

The north-eastern limit of the Mid-land, as also of Aryandom, was known in the time of the Buddha as the Kājaṅgala mountain. By the time the Sanskrit Buddhist work, the Divyāvadāna, was compiled, the name of the mountain changed to Puṇḍrakaksha, bordering on the prosperous town of Puṇḍravardhana or Varendra which is said to be a scene of activities of the Ājīvika and Jaina ascetics during the reign of king Aśoka. Champā (modern Bhagalpur) was then known to be the capital of Aṅga included in Aryandom. The Jaina Nirayāvalīya Sutta contains an interesting description of the sports of the ladies of Champā in the water of the Ganges, the description containing such details as how the ladies went on the back of an elephant and were sportfully thrown off and picked up by it while they were bathing and swimming in the water.

The Jaina Āyāraṃga Sutta points to a time when Rājha with its two divisions Vajrabhūmi and Subbrabhūmi—roughly speaking the District of Midnapur—afforded a retreat for the various orders of Indian ascetics, who found themselves rather in a strange land where its rude inhabitants set dogs upon them and in order to keep these animals off, some of the ascetics were compelled to carry sticks or bamboo staffs about them.

Bengal is a country which does not find mention in any of the known inscriptions of king Aśoka, though Vaṅgas are mentioned as a distinct people in one of the Brāhmaṇas. I shall not be surprised

if we, the modern Bengalis, feel ashamed to trace our descent from those Vaṅgas, who, according to the Brāhmaṇa texts, were a people outside the pale of the then known Aryan community.

We read in the commentary of the Pali Dhaniya Sutta, of the migration and encamping of the Gopas with their cattle as they moved towards the alluvial plains in Eastern India for finding out green pastures, as well as of their forecasts of weather guessed from certain behaviour of the crabs. It was not an easy task for the Buddhists to make a headway in Bengal which was under the sway of various local cults and various other religious sects.

To me the chief interest of Mr. Das Gupta's work lies in the fact that the information embodied in it is enough to convince any Bengali of the fact that our forefathers in Bengal were not after all a race of ease-loving honey-suckers sleeping on a bed of flowers. It is indeed the life of the bee which is emphasised by our poet D. L. Roy in a couplet of the Bengali national anthem composed by him :

তারা ফুলের উপর ঘুমিয়ে পড়ে
ফুলের মধু খেয়ে ।

Mr. Das Gupta's chapters on ship-building and commerce, and warfare and war-music go to show that there were parts of Bengal where the people were sturdy, manly and of adventurous spirit. We were surely not wholly an emotional race.

For the proper valuation of the materials collected by Mr. Das Gupta the reader will perhaps do well to divide Bengal into four different regions, *vis.*, (1) Pastoral and Agricultural, (2) Commercial and Industrial, (3) Urban and Metropolitan and (4) Mountainous and Hilly. The social and religious problems widely differed as they arose in this or that region. The sentiment which finds expression in the songs of the Vaishnava poets is a sentiment of the Pastoral and Agricultural region where Gauḍiya Vaishnavism reigns supreme. The simple joys and happiness of the Gopas are well represented by Dhaniya Gopa in the Pali Dhaniya Sutta when he says :

Pakkodano duddhakkhīro' ham asmi
anuttire Mahiyā samānavāso ।
Channā kūṭi, āhito gini :
atha ce patthayaṃ, pavassa deva ॥

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Aṃdha-makasā na vijjare
 kacche rūḷhatīṇe caranti gāvo ।
 Vuṭṭhim pi saheyyum āgatam
 atha ce patthayasī, pavassa deva ॥
 Gopī mama assavā alolā,
 dīgharattam saṃvāsiyā manāpā ।
 Tassā na suṇāmi kiñci pāpam
 atha ce patthayasī, pavassa deva ॥
 Attavetanabhato 'ham asmi
 puttā ca me samāniyā, arogā ।
 Tesam na suṇāmi kiñci pāpam—
 atha ce patthayasī, pavassa deva ॥
 Atthi vasā, atthi dhenupā,
 godharaniyo paveniyo'pi atthi ।
 Usabho 'pi gayampati ca atthi,
 atha ce patthayasī, pavassa deva ॥
 Khilā nikhātā asampavedhī,
 dāmā muñjamayā navā susaṃṭhānā ।
 Na hi sakkhinti dhenupā pi chettum—
 atha ce patthayasī, pavassa deva ॥

It is no exaggeration that some parts of West Bengal and the whole of the East Bengal bordering on the sea abounded in many navigable rivers. The river traffic was then as brisk as it is to-day. Mr. Das Gupta's references go to show that the sea-borne trade of Bengal mostly consisted of coasting trade. The names of the sea-coasts or parts mentioned in the chapter on ship-building and commerce are surely very interesting. Dr. Radhakumud Mookerjee would surely have been glad to utilize the information supplied in this particular chapter, in his "History of Indian Shipping and Maritime Activity."

Some of the important sea-coasts or ports visited by the merchant-vessels from Bengal and mentioned in the poetical works of Bijay Gupta (15th century) and others are included in the Mahāniddeśa list which can be dated as early as the second century B. C. The Mahāniddeśa list mentions in a serial order the names of Java, Tamali, Vaṅga, Elavaḍḍhana, Suvannakūṭa, Suvannabhūmi and Tambapaṇṇi. The Mahāniddeśa commentary does not help us at

all in identifying these ports. Java is evidently Yava, Vaṅga is likely a port in East Bengal, Tamali is no other than Tamluk in Midnapur District, Suvannakūṭa and Suvannabhūmi might as well be taken as two ports in Further India, and Tambapaṇṇi must be either a port in Southern India or in the northern coast of Ceylon. As late as the fifth century A. D., the Chinese traveller Fa-Hian returned to China from India by following the sea-route connecting Tamali or Tāmralipti with Tāmraparṇi or Ceylon and the island of Java. The existence of this route, as may be easily inferred from the Mahāniddeśa list, is as old as the second century B. C. None need be surprised that there were two other sea-routes connecting the ports of Tamali in West Bengal and Vaṅga in East Bengal with some ports in Burma.

Whether the Bengali merchants still carried on the trade with the Malaya Archipelago and Java or not when Bijay Gupta wrote his Manasāmaṅgal poems in the 15th century and Bhaṁsīdās wrote his Manasāmaṅgal poems or Mukundarām wrote his Chaṇḍīkāvya in the 16th century, is uncertain. We have mention of Pralamba, Nākuṭa, Abilaṅkā, Chandraśālya and Abartana islands as places touched by the sailing vessels from Bengal on their way to Sīṃhala (Ceylon) and Pāṭana (Gujarat), which cannot now be identified.

Ship-building became necessarily an important industry in the commercial regions of Bengal to keep up the maritime activities, utilising the services, as well of the carpenters as of the smiths, divers, pilots, captains, admirals and the rest. The account of the processional course, advance and return of the mercantile marine with all its details as quoted by Mr. Das Gupta is not altogether a thing of the past. I have seen with my own eyes the pompous ceremonial and processional return of such a fleet in Chittagong, where it is still in vogue among the daring and rich Kaivarta settlers of Haldarmukh, as a reminiscence of the romance that is gone. Ship-building—the pride of the Indian carpenters—still lingers as a distinct local industry in Chittagong.

The fate of the conjugal life could not but be precarious in the commercial regions—a young wife waiting and waiting, her husband a sea-faring merchant or a sailor, not returning, never sending a message though an age has passed away, as typified in Tennyson's

story of *Enoch Arden*. The practice of leaving a "Jaya-patra" (*lit.* the Writ of Victory) by the seafaring husband in the custody of his wife as a proof of legitimacy of the child born of her, was a necessity in these regions. The virtue of chastity in a married woman was never so much idealized in other works than those, *e.g.*, the *Manasā-mangal* poems, the *Chandrikāvyas*, the *Maimansingh Ballads* and others which ministered to the people of these regions.

The religion that could appeal to the people could not but be some form of the Śakti cult emphasising the manly moral virtues of fortitude, endurance, patience and energy. The criminal laws enforced by the kings were surely very rigorous. The course of life ran riot. The lives of sea-going merchants were so uncertain that in some of the communities in South India, as evidenced in the Pali *Valābassa Jataka*, the ordinary laws and ties of marriage had to be done away with.

The royal cities and the headquarters of the *Zamindars* formed the centres of court-life and courtesans and the urban and metropolitan regions where the poets and teachers found shelter and received patronage. It is these regions which became the strongholds of Brahmanism to impose its set laws and routines.

The mountainous or hilly regions formed the centres of military strength and Śaivism.

Mr. Das Gupta's chapter on Hindu-Moslem unity deserves notice. It contains the scholar's plea for the unity and coöperation for the two main Indian communities—the Hindu and the Musalman. The religions carry with them the seeds of sectarianism and communalism. Hinduism and Islam as interpreted and applied by their respective priests had served to widen the gulf between the two societies. The evidences cited by Mr. Das Gupta go to prove, that in spite of religious barriers, the Hindus and Musalmans have found a meeting ground in literature and to some extent, in social and religious life.

Mr. Das Gupta has really undertaken an enormous task. The materials collected by him require to be carefully compared with those that can be gathered from the Buddhist *Jatakas*. The materials can perhaps be classified and best studied in reference to four regions mentioned above. We, with our ingrained Shastric bias, are generally inclined to attribute all that we do or say to religion.

Yes, we say religion and do something else. The ultimate problem which may arise out of Mr. Das Gupta's line of work will perhaps be this : How far the course of human conduct is regulated by religion and how far is it determined by the laws enforced by the kings and the general conditions, traditions and environments ? I can well anticipate the solution in answer : The set laws are an imposition which serve to introduce a general uniformity ; the general condition truly determines the course of human life, which finds its thousand outlets for self-expression and self-realization in spite of all restrictions and oppositions.

CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY, }
2nd January, 1927. }

B. M. BARUA.

P R E F A C E

As a Research Assistant to Professor Rai Dinesh Chandra Sen Bahadur, D.Litt., Ramtanu Lahiri Research Fellow of the University of Calcutta, I have been engaged to collect and examine all references and allusions in our ancient Bengali literature to social life, customs and manners, ship-building and commerce, and other activities of the people among whom this literature sprang up and has been cherished as a treasure. It has been my duty to submit, in quarterly instalments, since my appointment in 1921, the results of my investigation in the form of separate theses for publication in the Journal of Letters after approval by Professor Sen and other competent authorities. The present volume of the Journal contains the first eleven of the approved theses, distributed according to their themes into different chapters and so arranged as to form a connected narrative. How far I have succeeded in presenting them as a coherent whole is a matter left to the reader to be judged. I need not mention that the old Bengali literature cannot boast of a systematic account of the various activities and expressions of the life of the people of Bengal. Had there been such an account at all available, my task would surely have been much easier and my conclusions could have been based upon a firmer ground. It is precisely the want of such an account which constitutes peculiar difficulties I have patiently to labour under.

Short summaries of the different chapters, taken in order, have been given in the Introduction and these will, it is hoped, serve to acquaint the reader with the contents of the chapters beforehand and enable him to have a clear forecast of the prospects that lie before him. I have written four other similar theses on other aspects of the social history of Bengal, which remain yet to be published in a separate volume of the Journal. Short summaries of the chapters of the next volume will also be found in the Introduction. I must admit that in building

up the present narrative of Bengal's social history, I have had to rely solely upon data derived from literature printed as well as in manuscripts. The task of testing this data in the light of other evidences from foreign travels, court-documents and similar papers, must necessarily be left to experts. But I venture to hope that this imperfection will be, to some extent, compensated for by the illustrative plates which I wish to produce in the next volume.

While I present my thesis on Bengal's social history, my memory travels back to Bengal's great son, the late Sir Asutosh Mookerjee, and feel sad that the master, who imposed upon me the task and inspired me to undertake it, is no more when the task is accomplished in the manner I am capable of. If any praise be due for the labour, it must go to him, for it is his inspiration that is really at the back thereof.

Professor Dinesh Chandra Sen, who is a lifelong votary of researches into the wealth of old Bengali literature, has never deprived me of the benefit of his able guidance and that, I must say, at the cost of his fast declining health and precious time. If I have anywhere failed in the task, the fault is absolutely mine. I humbly record my sincerest gratitude which, I know, will ever fall short of the great debt I owe him.

I need not say how helpful it is to have come into contact with and to receive encouraging words from so great a teacher and world-renowned savant as Professor Sylvain Levi. I crave the indulgence of the reader to reproduce his letter below, which indicates what a keen interest he evinced in my researches while I was yet carrying them on.

‘GOVERNMENT HOUSE,
Calcutta, the 28th January, 1922.

MY DEAR SIR,

It is too kind of you that you took so much trouble in collecting information for my own sake. But I can assure you that I enjoyed them at the utmost. * * * *

Your list of technical words and of the articles of trade are invaluable. I am afraid your kind help makes me intrusive, and I have again to ask you about the foreign countries and even Indian sea-ports mentioned in your old literature. I remember having heard that Chicacole or Coconada is often named. Perhaps I have seen it in one



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of D. C. Sen's books you are referring to, and of which I have positively fed my brain. Where is 'Patan' which you say to be mentioned most, next to Singhal?

I hope I shall have some good opportunity to meet you during the Conference and to get personally acquainted with you.

Yours thankfully,

SYLVAIN LEVI.

My sincerest thanks are due to Prof. Sylvain Levi and other gentlemen, whose never-failing encouragement made it possible for me to go over a large number of works in Bengali literature, including many manuscripts, preserved in the Calcutta University Bengali Manuscripts Library. I am much grateful to Professor Benimadhab Barua, M.A., D.Lit. (Lond.), for the interest he has taken on my behalf and for writing a 'Foreword' for this humble publication and also to Sir P. J. Hartog, Ex-Vice-Chancellor, Dacca University, Mr. H. E. Stapleton, I.E.S., and Prof. Suniti Kumar Chatterji, M.A., D.Lit. (Lond.), who encouraged and helped me with their valuable advice. I should also thank Mr. A. C. Ghatak, M.A., Superintendent of the Calcutta University Press, for the keen personal interest taken by him in the progress of the work while it was being seen through the Press.

CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY,

January 3, 1927.

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T. C. DAS GUPTA.

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INTRODUCTION

Considerable materials, regarding the social, political and religious history of Bengal lie strewn over the pages of old Bengali literature. The administrative history of Bengal during the Mahomedan rule as also of the period immediately preceding it, gleaned from the accounts of the Mahomedan historians and copper-plate inscriptions, does not give us sufficient information about the social life of Bengal. The accounts to be found in these records are, moreover, often full of high-flown panegyrics, bestowed lavishly by the writers on their patrons, the Rajas, whose cause they avowedly espoused. The court-parasites have oftentimes given accounts of things which may, at best, be taken as half-truths, and unfortunately the historian of Indian life and culture has, at the present day, to depend mainly on these materials, which are quite inadequate for historical purposes.

In the old Vernacular literature, the reader is carried through a jungle of legends, mythical stories and crude rustic fiction which are apparently far from being reliable materials for history.

But a closer observation reveals that this literature of legends and imaginary stories often bears the throbbings of life, and in this crude performance one can feel the pulse of the people,—their ideas and inspirations, their manners and customs, sometimes with a greater accuracy than in the state-records or inscriptions. Underlying these legends there is life with all its lights and shades. In these accounts the eyes of a true historian will discover precious materials which, supplemented by official records, the great value of which cannot be ignored, will enable him to reconstruct the social and political history of the country on the solid basis of a true scholarly research.

In the works like the Dharmamangal, the Chandimangal, the Manasāmangal, the Sunya Purān, the Gorakshavijay, the Sivāyanas and the Mymensingh Ballads,—the poets sometimes derive the subjects of their treatment from actual facts, and though much of their accounts

may be found tinged with poetic colourings, there cannot be any interested advocacy for a political cause, clouding their vision. The historical plays of Shakespeare give us far better glimpses into the social and political epochs of the English people than the voluminous accounts on the subject, left by the historians.

This is more or less true in regard to our Vernacular poem, also. The difficulty that confronts us in the field is the task of separating facts from fiction. All that is wanted, therefore, is a historian's critical judgment capable of distinguishing truth from fiction and of arriving at a scientific conclusion.

It is not possible, in many cases, to assign exact dates for want of materials, as also for the remoteness of the period to which the incidents relate.

But time may come when all available materials might be arranged in a chronological order; but it would now be quite premature to make any attempt in this direction.

Periods may now be generally considered in two main divisions, namely, Pre-Mahomedan and Mahomedan. The poets, though most of them belonged to the latter period, sometimes left accounts of facts which may be distinctly traced to the Hindu Epoch. The works treated of, in the following pages, roughly cover a few centuries—possibly those between the 10th and the 16th centuries. Of this period the last two centuries were most prolific in producing a large mass of literary materials.

In dealing with the social and other problems of Bengali life, materials for which have been mainly gathered from old Bengali literature, attempt has been made to follow the above principle in respect of chronology.

The subject matter has been divided into several chapters, as shown below :

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| (1) Manners and Customs. | (8) War-Music. |
| (2) Ship-Building and Commerce. | (9) Hindu-Moslem Unity. |
| (3) Costumes. | (10) Architecture. |
| (4) Ornaments. | (11) Religion. |
| (5) Culinary Art. | (12) Education. |
| (6) Pastimes. | (13) Castes and Professions. |
| (7) Warfare. | (14) Agriculture. |
| | (15) Economic Condition. |

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Each of the subjects mentioned here tells something new and as such, requires careful study. These items are but a few of the many, each of which in view of the special importance attaching to it, deserves elaborate treatment.

The manners and customs prevailing in the country during the period under review were most peculiar, disclosing an admixture of foreign elements in them. Examples are not rare to show the prevalence of many non-Hindu manners and customs in the country in bygone ages. Thus, when a daughter was given in marriage to a young man, her sister or sisters were also given to him as dowry together with a number of maid-servants. This we find in the case of Adunā and Padunā, the two daughters of a certain Raja, in the *Mānik Chandra Rājār' Gan*, evidently composed before the Mahomedan domination. Another custom, namely, that of trial by ordeal, was peculiar, and may be supposed to be an outcome of Buddhistic influences, though parallel cases may be found in the *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata*. This custom had a striking similarity with a similar practice prevalent among the Anglo-Saxons of England prior to the Norman conquest. The *Maynāmati* songs, the *Chandikāvya*s, the *Dharma-mangal* poems and the *Manasāmangal* poems are full of these examples of trials by ordeals.

The custom of keeping a written document (*Jayapatra*) from a husband, going abroad for a long period on trade purposes, by his wife under certain circumstances, was most peculiar. This was done to save the wife giving birth to a child during the absence of her husband (generally a merchant) from calumny. *Dhanapati*, the merchant of the *Chandikāvya* story, is said to have executed such a document in favour of his wife and we have reason to believe that it was held perfectly legal in the Law—Courts in those days. This throws a flood of light on ancient ways of life and points to an age when a wife was not under the complete subjugation of her husband, as in later days. The spirit of free love, free movements, and self-culture among women, as found in the recently discovered *Mymensingh* ballads, speak of an age quite different from the one that followed.

The keeping of trained dogs by the rich and giving them names show that they were once not regarded as untouchables. In the *Maynāmati* songs we learn that Raja Govindaachandra kept trained

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dogs, named them and made necessary arrangements for their comfort. The songs, composed before the advent of the Mahomedans into this country, refer to a period, when society was not influenced by orthodox Hinduism of later days.

That the merchants in the past enjoyed a status equal to that of the king is sufficiently illustrated in the *Manasāmangal* poems and the *Chandikāvyas*. Why and how they came to lose this exalted position require careful investigation. Bansidās, the celebrated poet of *Manasāmangal*, who flourished in the 16th century, made mention of passports being used by the merchants, duly signed and sealed by the King.

Bengal was once famous for her efficiency in the art of ship-building and her commercial activities established for her a high reputation worthy to be remembered. Besides, such foreign works as 'The Mahawanso' of Ceylon, wherein mention has been made of stupendous Bengali ships in which Prince Bijay and his companions arrived in Ceylon in the 6th century B.C., and other works of authority on Bengal's maritime activity similarly furnish authentic accounts of the subject, hitherto neglected by our countrymen. In the *Manasāmangal* poems and the *Chandikāvyas* we find animated descriptions of the commercial and maritime activities of the Bengali people during the Pre-Mahomedan period although the poets dealing with those subjects belonged to a subsequent age. These accounts refer to a period when Bengal enjoyed political independence and when her merchants crossed the seas on commercial enterprises unfettered by the trammels of social rules. The ships visited distant countries, such as Ceylon, Guzrat and Java and the old Bengali literature described incidentally the routes, the islands and their inhabitants, and various other things in connection with their voyages. The description, though otherwise exaggerated due to poetic excesses, is amazingly accurate in respect of the route taken by the vessels. With all these poetic extravagance and absurdities the mention of huge crabs and lobsters in the Madras waters, by the poets, is found to be true even to this day.

The mention of the Portuguese Pirate-ships (*Armadas*) and the once-important ports of Tamluk and Chicacole (Madras Presidency), which we come across so often in the pages of our old

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literature, is a matter of common knowledge. The Bengali ships are stated as having doubled Cape Comorin and reached Pātau or Somnathpātan in Guzrat. The hugeness of ships and the picturesque shape of the prows representing various animals according to the traditional mode of ship-building (as mentioned in Juktikalpataru) are interesting indeed. The poets seem to have described facts, though not entirely free from poetic flourishes. The rites and beliefs in connection with sea-voyage and sea-going vessels curiously resemble those prevalent in the days of Greek civilization, in Europe.

The crew of a ship consisted of carpenters, pilots, and naval forces. There was a day when carpenters filled the places of modern Engineers both in the East and the West, when these ships were principally made of wood and plied with the help of sails and oars.

The overseas trade, once carried on by the people of Bengal, was really extensive and the merchandise in which they generally dealt consisted mainly of agricultural products which formed the chief resources of the country. Among other items of export, glass deserves special mention.

The fact that Bengal once used to manufacture glass can be substantiated by reference to the pages of the old Bengali literature as also to the statement made in the *Periplus*.

The grains, earthen and wooden wares, and cloths (specially of very fine textures) were exported in exchange for spices, horses, and others. Spices were perhaps brought from the East Indies.

Now, so far as costume is concerned, there has not been any considerable change. The dress worn by the people of this country in ages long gone by, was very much the same as it is in the present day. In spite of this fact it is not very difficult to mark some peculiarities which were current in the Hindu period and were even in existence during a considerable part of the Mahomedan rule. We have it, on the authority of the *Manasāmangal* by Bansidās, a book written in the 16th century A.D., that people used to wear the cloth almost in the same fashion as their upcountry brethren do it now. In the by-gone days of the Hindu rule the warriors perhaps wore armour, indications of which may be found in the *Dharmamangal* poems. No doubt the practice lingered, to some extent,

even during the Mahomedan period. Wearing of velvet shoes by the warriors and the silver shoes by the rich as described by the poets of the Dharma songs and the Manasāmangal poems deserves our notice. In the days of old Hindu rule the fashion was perhaps to wear chāddar, save and except on special occasions. The more general practice of wearing shirts and coats seems to have come into existence with the advent of Mahomedans in this country.

In the Manasāmangal poems we find the use of turban (Pāgri) confined only to the well-to-do section of the community.

It is in the costume of ladies that we mark a more remarkable change. They used sālīs of fine fabric which are now no longer in use. Among these may be mentioned Meghnāl, Meghdumbur, Gangājali and other sālīs. The ladies wore an underwear resembling the petticoat of the present day and a kind of belt known as the Nibibandha.¹ We find the underwear mentioned in the Gobindalilāmrita of Jadunandan Das. Sometimes the ladies of aristocratic families wore *Ghōgrā* (gowns), *Oḍnā* (scarfs) and *Kāñchulī* (corsets) probably after the Mahomedan fashion. But *Kāñchulī* (corset) had the antiquity of the days of the Vedic culture. Among the toilet requisites *Dhup* (incense) was invariably used to scent the hair. *Amlōkī* or myrobalan was generally used in place of soap, though the use of the latter was not wholly unknown as we find in the Kāmasāstra of Bātsyāyana the mention of Phenaka (a kind of soap). The art of decorating the face with paints was practised with great care. It was known as *Patra-Rachanā* (lit. leaf-painting) and somewhat commonly described as *Alakā* and *Tilakā*.

The Tilaka marks had a great utility in indicating the caste, to which a particular man belonged.

Some changes are noticeable in respect of ornaments. Such ornaments as Keyur, Angada and Valaya of various types have come down to us from a remote past and we find mention of them in the Rāmāyana and the Mahābhārata. Many of these ornaments were worn by both the sexes from the forgotten past down to a considerable part of the Mahomedan period. Of the very old ornaments Sāteswari Hār and Hirāmangal Raḍī (for the ears)

¹ The belt used by men was known as the Patukā.

attract our attention. Magarkhāḍu and Mallatoḍar are some of the old items of ornaments. Of these Mallatoḍar was perhaps introduced in the country during the days of the Mahomedan rule. The name seems to suggest that the ornament might have derived the name from Todarmal the great finance minister of Akbar who stayed in Bengal for a short period. The Mallas or wrestlers favoured this ornament which they wore on their feet when going out to exhibit the feats of arms. 'Khāḍu' and Tāḍ, a kind of armlet, once constituted articles of gift for presentation purposes. Beshar was another kind of old ornament used to adorn the nose, being still worn in some parts of our country.

Some of these ornaments are still favoured by women in the countryside, though the glamour of modern civilization has completely revolutionised the ancient forms and usages in the bigger centres of metropolitan life. Jadunandan Das, in his Bengali version of Krisnadās Kavirāja's Sanskrit work Gobindallāmrita, gives an account of the old ornaments and ladies' costumes, while describing the toilet of Rādhā.

Culinary art attained a high degree of perfection at the hands of the Bengali women from time immemorial. Knowledge of the details of cooking was considered essential for women in general and efficiency in this art was looked upon as an attainment even by ladies of high rank in our society. Our poets often took pride in depicting female characters, possessing, among other finer qualities, a knowledge of this special art. Thus Khullanā, Sanakā and a host of other ladies whom we find to have excelled in this art remind us of the typical Greek community of Homeric days.

The Hindus always refrained from taking meals cooked by strangers in support of which hard-and-fast rules were framed to suit their own interpretation of 'āchāra' or purity.

A newly married wife was required to cook dainties and serve them with her own hands to the kinsmen and relatives, assembled to partake of the nuptial feast.

Great stress was always laid upon the selection of the various items of food from considerations of health, and elaborate rules were framed accordingly.

The very old sayings of Dāk and Khanā show the particular attention paid to the selection of food. Even to-day Bengali

almanacs show to what excesses restrictions in matters of food were carried. Although, to a casual observer, these rules may appear absurd and meaningless, they are doubtless based on solid hygienic principle.

More attention was given to the preparations of sweets, vegetables and fish curries than that of meat. Special preparations of sweets, called *Ālfā* and *Indramithā* are now completely forgotten in our country though they are so often spoken of by old Bengali poets. *Sitāmiśrī* and *Olālāndu* also are becoming forgotten.

Among vegetable dishes *Dugdhakusumbhā* was once very famous. Many of the old varieties of fish and meat curries are still prepared in the country.

It seems that before the advent of the Mahomedans in India the people used to enjoy a free life unfettered by the trammels of increasingly numerous social and religious institutions. The women took part in physical exercises both indoor and outdoor.¹ This may seem strange now-a-days but nevertheless it was a fact based on literary and historical evidence. Examples of women possessing physical strength as in ancient Sparta, may be seen in old Bengali works such as the *Dharmamangal* poems. The Amazonian princess *Mallikā* of our folk literature is an example on this point. The young always took great interest in physical culture. And demonstration of physical feats were often held and enjoyed by the people very much in the same way as the boxing tournaments in Western countries.

The wrestling of Prince *Lāusen* with his wicked adversary shows the modes generally adopted in a contest. In the *Maynāmati* songs, *Mymensingh* ballads and the *Manasāmangal* poems, we learn that hawking or falconry and pigeon-rearing formed some of the favourite pastimes in the days long gone by. Another game once very popular was the celebrated 'geru' play. In a pada of *Chandidās* we come across the following: 'কুলের গেরুয়া লুফিয়া ধরয়ে সঘনে দেখায় পাশ.' This geru or ball-playing still obtains in some parts of West-Bengal. But the more popular among the outdoor games was the aristocratic 'Chaugān' corresponding to polo, which was current during the

¹ See the *Dharmamangal* Poems, the *Maynāmati* Songs, and the stories of *Pushpamālā* and *Mallikā*.

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Mahomedan rule. The game was a favourite one with the Emperor Akbar. The word 'Chaugān' is Persian, signifying play with a ball and a stick. It was played on horseback (see *Encyclo. Britt.*) and is known to have originated in Kashmir from which it travelled to different countries including Persia, Tibet, Manipur and Bengal, Bengal being directly indebted to Manipur for its introduction into this country. The description of Chaugān play in Ālāol's *Padmāvat* is interesting. With the loss of her political freedom, Bengal lost many of her indigenous games especially the outdoor ones and the ladies gradually ceased to take any interest in them.

Of the indoor games dice and chess found favour in the days of old as they do now. Even the women joined in these games. In the *Maynāmati* songs we learn of a peculiar game known as *Duāpati* which might be the same as or similar to chess.

The description of warfare, as given by our poets, refers to the Hindu period; but the accounts were written in the Mahomedan period and as such, could not be altogether free from Mahomedan influences. The twelve sub-lords attending a king was a time-honoured custom.¹ The description of weapons too points to the same conclusion. The *mushals*, *mudgars*, *shels*, *sools*, etc., were as old as the days of the *Rāmāyana* and the *Mahābhārata*. An elaborate description of these weapons and their use may be found in the *Dhanurveda*, *Arthasāstra*, *Nitiprakāśikā* and some other works dealing with the subject.² Some of these weapons resemble a boomerang of Australia and a cross-bow of mediaeval Europe. The mention of swords therein leads us to suppose that Bengal might have manufactured the weapon. The chariots, the elephants, the cavalry and the infantry were known as the four arms. There was no caste-distinction among soldiers who were recruited from all sections of the community. Even foreigners were employed, of whom Telugus (the *Madrasis*) were prominent.

As for war-music it may be said with certainty that many of the old instruments are still used. Among these the varieties of drums

¹ See the *Dharmamāngal Poems* of Ramchandra Banerjee.

² See Gustav Opperts' 'The Weapons, Army Organisations, and Political Maxims of the Ancient Hindus' and Ramdas Sen's 'Bhārat-Rahasya.'

and pipes attract our attention. The horn is no longer to be found although it was extensively used.

After the conquest of Bengal by the Mahomedans, the two communities, *e.g.*, the Hindus and the Muslims lived together on cordial terms and the vexed question of Hindu-Moslem unity did not arise at all. Although the Mahomedan rulers at first grew unpopular with their Hindu subjects because of their foreign origin and iconoclastic activities, the situation changed as soon as the religious zeal abated with the march of time and the rulers began to direct their attention to administrative affairs. Of course ill-will existed in individual cases as it exists everywhere. But it was caused rather by personal jealousies than by any communal dissensions. When an autocrat abused his powers—be he a Hindu or a Mahomedan—ill-feelings are, as a matter of fact, sure to grow, and this does not require any serious communal difference to aggravate it.

No wonder therefore, that the two communities sometimes fell out under similar circumstances. Among other works, the Mymensingh Ballads and the Manasāmangal poems contain descriptions of racial animosities being provoked by similar causes.

Bengal was not much known in the past to the outside world for the excellence of her architectural work. According to the verdict of Western experts Bengal could not develop her architecture to any great extent on account of certain natural causes, for example, want of stone quarries and general unsuitability of the soil for solid stone-buildings. Among the supporters of this theory, Mr. Fergusson's views deserve special mention. Although this theory seems to be to some extent correct, it is nevertheless open to contention. Our old literature throws a side light on our past architecture the grandeur of which seems to be a wonder to us. No doubt, the poets are apt to exaggerate but what they said are generally true. In the Chandikāvya of Dwija Kamala Lochan and in many other works we find excellent descriptions of stone-buildings inlaid with gems of various colours.

The peculiarities of temple-construction, with jars fixed above the spires, were indeed remarkable. The extensive use of glass too is worthy of notice. The peculiarities of the building of cities and the construction of fortress had been mentioned in detail by various poets among whom we may specially mention the poet Bhāratchandra, the

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great contemporary and court-poet of Raja Krishnachandra, who flourished in the first half of the 18th century. The Mahomedan architecture developed in no small degree in Bengal—which belonged to the Gaudian. Distinct traces of this type of architecture in the works of Bhāratenanāra and many others bearing Mahomedan stamp, are noticeable. The architectural ruins of Gauḍ, once the capital of the Mahomedans, draw the admiration of the world and Fergusson had incidentally to admit the abundance of stone-buildings in this province.

But the greatest credit of Bengal lies, according to this authority, in the introduction of curvilinear roofing in her buildings. Bengal is said to have taught the world the method of building this kind of roofs. With bamboo and thatch the Bengalees used to build curvilinear roofs in the past though these are now growing gradually scarce.

Even in stone and brick-built houses, these roofings were used. In old Gauḍ, ruins of such houses may still be seen. Another peculiarity in the building of houses was quite unique. It was the use of twelve doors in a room, known as Bāraduāri Ghar. In Gauḍ there still exist the ruins of a room with twelve doors. In the recently discovered Mymensingh ballads, Bāraduāri ghar has been mentioned in more than one place. Among other peculiar constructions the steel-house for Lakshindra in the Manasāmangal poems, the 'Tangighar' rooms built in a lake as is found in the Chandikāvya and Gorakshavijay and the underground prison-houses deserve special mention. The peculiar ditches or moats surrounding a fortified castle, the concentric circles of wards around a city, the Chowkbazar, and the Kotowali (the police station) were perhaps partly Mahomedan in origin. But the system of allotting different parts of a city to different castes and professions perhaps mainly originated with the Hindus and we read about them in old Sanskrit literature on architecture and town-planning.

So far as religion is concerned, the country showed a marked tendency, especially during the Mahomedan rule towards transition from Buddhism to the present-day Hinduism. If we trace the course of religion from the 10th down to the 11th century we see the Mahayana form of Buddhism holding the people in its sway. Although various other cults,—the Dharma cult, for example, counted



many adherents simultaneously, still it must be admitted that most of them had an element of Buddhism in them. Such was really the influence of Buddhism in those days, that the Dharma cult which possessed an extensive literature of its own comprising among others, the Sunya Puran, the Dharma-mangal poems and the Maynāmati songs, is supposed by many as being an offshoot of Buddhism. The quarrels between the rival cults, *e.g.*, between the Sun and the Dharma cults, fill up some forgotten pages of our history. The Sun-cult is still traceable in the tenets of Grabāchāryyas and the Bratakathās (*vis.*, of Iturāl). Although some jealous Hindu Rajas of the Sen dynasty did much to revive the Pauranik-Hinduism as it exists to-day, Buddhism was still there in some form or other among the masses. In spite of the degeneration of its old ideals, the legacy of moral sentiment of Buddhism was not altogether lost to the masses. The Bratakathās and the Rupakathā of Mālanchamālā bear evidence of this fact. With the advent of the Mahomedans Buddhism finally lost its lingering hold upon the people, and out of its ruins grew up the present form of Hinduism, revived and remodelled by the zealous Brahmin reformers who particularly emphasised upon the observance of purity in social practices, or Āchāra, as it was called, evidently with a view to counteracting the evils, arising out of contact with alien people, people professing a different religion. Perhaps it was Vaisnavism that sounded the death-knell of Buddhism in this country having assimilated some of its best features.

Though Buddhism gradually declined in this country we cannot forget its great merits. The theory of cosmogony, it is to be observed, as expounded in the Sunya Purān of the Dharma cult, bore resemblance to the idea of creation propounded in the Rigveda.

The idea of action ¹ once again exercised a more powerful influence over the minds of the people than that of complete surrender in everything to gods, fostered by the prevailing cult of devotion which became subsequently the guiding factor in the life of the people of this country.

¹ For example, we may mention the characters of Lūsēn, Kāṇḍom, Lakhā, Banjāvatī, Maynāmati and a host of others to be found in the Buddhistic literature, such as the Dharmamangal poems and the Maynāmati songs.

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In the Maynāmati songs we find the son putting his own mother into boiling oil. This is evidently an un-Hindu sentiment and every Hindu will feel abhorrence at such an instance of monstrously unfilial conduct. This we trace to the degenerate Mahāyāna form of Buddhism when the theory of action exercised its sway over the minds of the people. The belief that mystic rites and mantras could work wonders may be traced not only in almost every page of the literature of the Dharma-cult but also in the literature of the Hindu religion, as illustrated by the legends of the sages, *e.g.*, Durbāsā, Biswāmitra and Bhrigu. Throwing one into boiling oil had also its parallel in the story of Sudhannā of the Mahābhārata. Karna's sacrifice of his son Brisaketu to satisfy a Brahmin guest in the familiar story of the Mahābhārata has its parallel in the Buddhist story of Luichandra.

All these tend to show that perhaps the form of Hinduism, then prevalent, was considerably influenced by the Buddhist ideas and beliefs as a result of which the Bengali recensions of the Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyana are specially intermingled with such grotesque narratives. The Agni Parikshā (or fire-ordeal) of Sita has its parallel in the stories of Behulā and Khullānā of the Manasā-mangal poems, and the Chandikāvyas which are apparently imbued with the Buddhist ideas. The Tapasyā or self-mortification of Ravana of the Rāmāyana story corresponds to the self-mortification of Lāusen and Ranjāvati of the Dharma songs.

In point of education it may be said that it was never neglected in the Pre-Mahomedan days. There were regular schools for imparting education in the Primary, Secondary and the Higher or Collegiate stages. Centres of higher education are still well known as the Tols. It is most peculiar that caste was no bar to education. In the old Chandikāvya story Sreemanta, though a Bāniā by caste, received the same kind of education with the Brahmin boys. The Śāradāmangal by Dayārām and the Mymensingh ballads describe vividly the system of education obtaining in old days.

What strikes us most is the attention given to female education. Girls were equally educated with the boys, sometimes reading in the

same school under the same *guru*. The story of Vidyā-Sundar in which Princess Vidyā challenged all the princes of the world for a literary contest with her, was not altogether a myth. Literacy prevailed among the lowest, as well as, the highest classes. Thus we find Fullarā, the fowler-woman, quoting the Sāstras, Khullanā, the Bāniā lady, recognising her husband's handwriting, a Brahmin woman in her connection forging the letter, and a minister's daughter romantically changing a letter in a manner which helped to bring about her union in marriage with a youngman for whom she conceived a liking. Even high class public women were also credited with the capacity for transacting documentary business as we learn from the Maynāmātī songs. Another public woman of the Dharmamangal poems put knotty questions, shewing great erudition, to a prince, for solution. Besides having literary education, the women of older days were expert in the fine arts. The decorative excellence of Surikshā in the Dharmamangal poems and of many other women in embroidery and other works astound us in no small degree. There are also numerous examples of excellent Ālipanā drawings in the Mymensingh ballads and other works. Dancing was so much cultivated in the Pre-Islamic days that Behulā of the Manasāmangal poems earned the epithet of "Dancing Behulā" and the story says that this qualification of Behulā was instrumental even in restoring her dead husband to life. The stories of Mallikā, Kalingā, Lakhā and a host of others show conclusively to what extent the women of our land gave attention to physical culture, like the Spartan women of ancient Greece. These stories prove the spirit of the times and the pictures were, perhaps, drawn from the exact state of society in a particular period of her life.

About the various castes it cannot be denied that there was much peculiarity in the bygone days due probably to the prevalence of Buddhism in the land. In the Sunya Purān and the Dharma-mangal poems, we find such low castes as the Hāḍīs and the Doms receiving even the laudatory homage of the staunchest Brahmins and occupying the foremost position in society. The sun-worshipping Grahāchāryyas and also the Bāniās once occupied a better status than they hold now. How these castes came to lose their position and the Kanouji Brahmins came to occupy the fore-front in the Hindu society

is, inspite of meagre data, an interesting study. Different parts of a city were allotted to different castes. Besides, we see from the times of Raghunandan the stereotyped form of the present-day Hindu society with the Brahmins as its undisputed head, has held its ground. But previously, Buddhism, Nāthism, and some other cults, and in later days, Vaisnavism,—strove to oppose it with all their strength. If we read the Buddhistic Jātak stories and some other works it seems to us that the reason for the superior position of some inferior castes of the present-day was that, that caste was in the making at the life-time of Buddha, as Prof. Rhys Davids would say. The present form dates with Raghunandan (15th century) but the attempt for stereotyped caste-system and Brahminic supremacy may be traced even from the days of the Mahābhārata when the Kshatriyas disputed the position of the Brahmins with great force. In Bengal it was the Sen Rajas who became the staunch upholders of Brahminic supremacy and established gradations in society from the standpoint of merit alone which laterly turned to be the hereditary privilege of the descendants of the original holders of those special recognition. The system has since been known as the *kulinism*, and perhaps has wrought more mischief than benefit to society, since its first inception.

In respect of Agriculture, the Bengali peasants attained a high degree of perfection, in a very remote period of our history (9th-10th century). The sayings of Dāk and Khanā,—specially the latter, furnish a store-house of agricultural wisdom—the heritage of the Bengal peasantry. There is no doubt that the cultivators committed to memory most of these aphorisms and followed the principles contained in them in their agricultural operations with the utmost precision. It is a peculiar feature that astrology formed an important element in these aphorisms and the technicalities employed in them must have been highly useful to the peasant-folk from the practical point of view. It may safely be said that the cultivators could appreciate essential principles of the science of astrology, disseminated amongst the masses, by means of couplets which could be easily understood. The weather fore cast in the aphorisms of Khanā is so definite that the cultivators followed it with great advantage. Specially interesting are the agricultural superstitions (in respect of sowing seeds and plucking fruits) by

which our illiterate peasants were guided. Inspite of much that can be said against superstitions in general, we must admit that some of them were really beneficial to agriculture as they are evidently the outcome of agricultural wisdom based on one practical experience of our race in the matter, from an early age.

As regards the economic condition of the people, it may be said without any hesitation that during the Pre-Mahomedan period as also to some extent in the Mahomedan, they enjoyed considerable prosperity though there were occasional reverses, due chiefly to the misrule of individual despots. The Maynāmati songs, among others, seem to confirm this view, though the picture is clearly overdrawn. Although the common people led rather a plain and simple life during Hindu rule, to the rich, naturally enough, articles of luxury were not altogether unknown. Thus various arts and industries—such as those of weaving, embroidery, painting and others—flourished in the country. Cowries were then the prevailing medium of exchange though barter was frequently resorted to, as we read in the old Bengali literature.

N B. The greater part of the introduction appeared in the June number (1926) of the Modern Review.

Aspects of Bengali Society

from

Old Bengali Literature

CHAPTER I

MANNERS AND CUSTOMS

Ordeals.—Before we dwell upon the social customs prevalent in Bengal in the Hindu and the early Mahomedan periods, it would be well to begin with a description of the tests applied in the early days of the history of Bengal for ascertaining the character of criminals and suspected persons. It is needless for us to attempt at tracing the origin of these tests or ordeals. Some of these were extremely crude and might have come down from a remote pre-historic period, others no doubt bear trace of a Tibeto-Burman origin and the rest might have their origin in the degenerate forms of Tāntric Buddhism. In the Maynāmati songs we find a description of Rājā Govindachandra testing the integrity of his own mother by throwing her into a vat containing boiling oil which is evidently a monstrous exaggeration. In spite, however, of all the hyperbolic display of poetic fiction, the poets of Manasā-Mangal and Chaṇḍikāvya distinctly indicate some of the tests which were applied for ascertaining the guilt of suspects in the Hindu periods. We find numerous forms of these tests suggested as alternative ordeals for Behulā and Khullanā. The Aṣṭaparīkṣā or the eight ordeals so often described by our poets consisted of piety, fire, water, seat, ring, serpent, iron and balance ordeals. There were three more, namely, the hot iron, wax-house and iron ordeals. These ordeals have something in common with those prevalent in Europe in the contemporary period. Trial with hot iron was often resorted to in England in the pre-Norman period and walking blind-fold over red-hot plough-shares, plunging one's arms into the boiling water and grasping red-hot iron, etc., were also some

of the English ordeals¹ corresponding to Bengali ones.² The ordeals which were intended for invoking divine help rather than appealing to human agency are still resorted to in this country and are now known as 'Jalpaḍā'—a kind of water ordeal 'Chāulpaḍā'—rice ordeal, 'Nalehālā'—Reed ordeal, 'Bāṭichālā'—cup ordeal, etc. In Jalpaḍā the culprit is to drink water charmed with Mantras, the effect of which is believed to make him vomit blood. Similarly in Chāulpaḍā the culprit is to chew rice under certain condition which is believed to produce some effect indicative of his guilt. In the last two ordeals, the reed and the cup, when charmed, lead the person who touched them, to the culprit or the spot of the perpetration of the guilt.

Marriage and dowry—There was a curious custom of giving away a younger sister of the bride to the bridegroom as a part of the dowry. In Manikehandrarājār Gān, composed sometime between

¹ The following forms of ordeal were known as the Aṣṭaparīkṣā :—

(a) Dharmādharma-parīkṣā or piety ordeal. Here a person had to thrust his hand into a big jar and pick out a ring from it at once without knowing where it lay.

(b) Agni-parīkṣā or fire ordeal. Here one was to walk seven times over a furnace covering oneself with cotton.

(c) Jala-Parīkṣā or water ordeal. Here one was to be thrown into water bound hand and foot.

(d) Āsana-Parīkṣā or seat ordeal. Here one was to remain suspended in the air without any support.

(e) Anguri-Parīkṣā or ring ordeal. Here one was to pick up a ring from a jar full of boiling ghee.

(f) Sarpa-Parīkṣā or serpent ordeal. It is traditionally believed that some of the most venomous snakes have gems on their hood. The victim was to seize one from the hood of a snake without being stung.

(g) Lauha-Parīkṣā or iron ordeal. One was to handle red-hot iron.

(h) Tula-Parīkṣā or Balance ordeal. Here one weighed in a balance was required to be as light as a particular piece of gold. See Bansidās's *Manasāmangal*, p. 651. Two new ordeals mentioned in the *Chandrikāvya* by Mukundaram (pp. 181-83), viz., hot iron and wax ordeals. In the former case a piece of red-hot iron was to be carried by the victim who was made to walk round a circle seven times with it. In the latter case one used to be thrown into a wax-house which afterwards used to be set on fire. The cooking of iron grain till they become soft and edible is mentioned in the *Manasāmangal* by Bansidās (p. 519). The system of trial by means of ordeals is described by Hiuntsang who visited India in the 7th century (see V. Smith's *Early History of India*, 342).

² See the *Groundwork of British History* by G. F. Warner.

³ *Asiatic Researches* Vol. I. See also the article ভারতের প্রাচীন বিচার পদ্ধতি by Surendranath Ghosh, *Pravasi Srāvan* 1330-B3.

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the 11th and the 12th centuries we find Rājā Govinda Chandra marrying Adunā, the elder daughter of Rājā Harischandra of Sābhār, and receiving Padunā, his younger daughter as dowry, who however, for all intents and purposes became his wife.¹ When marrying, the Rājā received a hundred maids, in addition, to look after his household.

Marriages were held as a fitting occasion, by the well-to-do sections of the community such as the Banias, for the display of wealth and pomp, and may be found in the description of the marriage ceremony of Lakṣmīndra, son of Chānd Sadāgar, in the Manasāmangal poems.

“Fourteen hundred high-born gentlemen of the Baniā caste accompanied the bridal party; three hundred bards followed, singing songs composed specially for the occasion. A large number of gardeners, barbers, weavers and numerous concert parties, and seven thousand men in charge of fire-works advanced towards Niehhaninagar. Seven hundred and seventy litters, made of gold and silver, were in the procession. Chānd Sadāgar, surrounded by his friends and relations, and seated on an elephant with richest trappings and with a carpet hāudā on, fringed with diamond pendants and pearls, followed the party, flanked by hundreds of torch-bearers. In the middle of the procession, Lakṣmīndra, who now looked transcendently beautiful, came along, magnificently mounted on a noble steed. He wore a crown on his head, studded with precious stones and round his neck were garlands of fresh flowers and a necklace of pearls.....”²

¹ See Mānikachandra Rājār Gān and ‘Gopichandrer Gān.’ Babu Nalinikānta Bhattasali refers to the practice of giving away the maid attendants of a girl of respectable family as part of the dowry to the bridegroom at the time of marriage as being still prevalent in the district of Jalpaiguri. See p. 9, Bhattasali’s edition of Maynamati songs. Professor Jogesachandra Ray says that the practice prevailing in the Rājā’s palace in Orissa is to give away the maid attendants of the bride in dowry on the occasion of a marriage, *Prativā, Bhādra*, 1328 B.S. Compare the reference to Nityānanda’s marriage, in ‘Nityānanda-Vamsa-Vistār’ (p. 12). But the custom in many cases is to give away sisters as part of a dowry. The similarity in the two names, Adunā and Padunā and the fact that on Govindachandra’s desertion of the palace the other wives of the Rājā went to the harem of Khetu, his foster-brother, Adunā and Padunā remaining true to the ascetic prince, seemed to indicate that Padunā who was given away to Govindachandra along with his wife Adunā, was her sister and did not hold an inferior position.

² See Manasāmangal poems of Bijay Gupta, Bansi Das, Ksemananda, etc., and Behulā, the Indian Pilgrim’s Progress, by K. C. Sen and J. W. Petavel, pp. 25-26.

The system of receiving dowry was also in vogue in the past with this difference that the bride's side, and not the bridegroom's side, as is the case now-a-days, was the recipient. But it still remains the same with the lower classes (*e. g.*, the Māthiāls). The songs of the sun-god are full of pathos expressing sentiments of a girl whose father having received the Pan before an assembly was under the legal and moral obligations to allow her to be taken away by her husband at a tender age when she naturally longed for the society of her parents. The pathetic outbursts of feelings on such occasions give a true and unvarnished picture of a particular aspect of our society.¹

Owing to the marriage of girls before adolescence, parents had often to deplore untimely widowhood of their daughters—the saddest calamity in the life of married girls. Widow-remarriage was not allowed in the upper classes of the Hindu society. Besides widows were not allowed to participate in social functions such as marriage, as their appearance was considered inauspicious. The lot of these girls became harder when, with the loss of their husbands, they gradually found themselves deprived of almost all the privileges enjoyed by a woman and put as it were under a social ban, requiring to pass their lives in austerities, attended with fasting, vigil and numerous other hardships. So, it is not difficult to fathom the feelings of a girl-widow's parents. In their affection the parents of the unfortunate widows would sometimes allow them to use Fāg (red powder), gold bracelets and Pāṭṣāḍi (a kind of cloth) in substitution for Sindur (vermilion), Śāṅkhā (shell-bracelets) and Kṣhūān (cloth)² which only

¹ See the songs of the Sun-god:

* * * *

“ভান্না নাও মাদারের বৈঠা চলকে ওঠে পাণী ।
 ধীরে ধীরে বাওরে মাঝি আমি মায়ের কান্দন শুনি ॥
 ভান্না নাও মাদারের বৈঠা চলকে ওঠে পাণী ।
 ধীরে ধীরে বাওরে মাঝি ভাই ভাইয়ের কান্দন শুনি ॥
 ভান্না নাও মাদারের বৈঠা চলকে ওঠে পাণী ।
 ধীরে ধীরে বাওরে মাঝি ভাই বইনের কান্দন শুনি ॥”

² See Manasāmangal by Ketakādas Kṣhemānanda,

“খনি বদলে দিব কাঁচা পাটের শাড়ী ।
 শঙ্খ বদলে দিব স্বর্ণের চুড়ি ।
 সিন্দুর বদলে দিব কাউগের শুড়ি ॥”

the wives with their husbands alive are privileged to wear. The practice of chewing betels by widows as mentioned elsewhere and the practice of using costumes and ornaments by them, as everybody knows, are now denounced in our society.

Jaypatra.—There was a time when commerce was in a flourishing condition in Bengal. The merchant community in those days held a position very little different from that of a prince. The merchant princes in those days sailed across the deep in an undaunted spirit and spread the name of Bengal far and wide as they stopped at various ports with ships laden with the products of this land. In course of these voyages years would sometimes elapse before they could re-embark for home. It happened not infrequently that a merchant had to go away when his wife was in an early stage of pregnancy, too early sometimes to be noticed. It was often found from experience that these wives, after the departure of their husbands, were subjected to popular suspicion and scandal. Our folklore is full of descriptions of the miseries of these wives.¹ In the story of Khullanā in Chandikāvya we find the merchant Dhanapati leaving for Singhal (Ceylon), under orders of the king, for trade-purposes with ships laden with merchandise. The merchant had to stay away from home for a very long time. Shortly after his departure, his wife Khullanā showed signs of conception and in due time gave birth to a son. Srimanta was the name given to this boy, who at an early age was sent to a Pāthsālā where his proficiency in all the subjects struck his Guru with astonishment. On one occasion, the Guru dropped a hint regarding his parentage by way of joke, which the lad deeply took to his heart. Thereupon he left home on board a ship in quest of his father and finally came back with Dhanapati, his father. Instances of this nature are numerous in our folk-literature. The opinion of the society often influenced the minds of the husbands of these hapless wives and they were persecuted even by their husbands. In these circumstances, a clear necessity demanded some sort of remedy with a view to affording protection to these women and safeguarding their fair name, and 'Jaypatra'² was the thing which gave them the remedy. This was a letter given to them by their husbands, on the eve of their departure

¹ See Thākurdādār-jhulī by D. Majumdar.

² See Kavikankan Mukundaram's Chandikāvya (Bangabasi ed.), p. 190.

for foreign countries, admitting if their wives were in an advanced state of pregnancy or even if there were any signs of the same. This document, which was to be signed by the husband and sealed in his presence, used to be kept by the wife for production when necessary, and was moreover, recognised by the court.

It is difficult to ascertain when this peculiar custom came to be introduced in Bengal, but that there was once an imperative necessity for such a measure is an unquestionable fact.

Charms.—The use of charms by women to exercise control over their husbands was very popular in the 15th and the 16th centuries in Bengal. It was specially resorted to by women who wanted to make their husbands subservient to their wishes as they were constantly in dread of losing all hold on them and of their co-wives exercising greater control on their husbands. There might have been some justification for this action on the part of the wives who, in many cases, were treated with neglect by their husbands. The drugging and charming perhaps came to our country from Kāmrup, one of the centres of the Tāntric cult. It is said in the countryside, even to-day, that the women of Kāmrup are capable of transforming a man into a lamb, to which unfortunate condition many strangers visiting that place are believed to have been reduced by unscrupulous women in the past. The belief in the theory that drugging or the simple utterance of Mantras can change a human being, like the characters in the stories told in the Arabian Nights, into a lower animal has been handed down to us from the days of the *Tāntric Mantrāyana* *Cult of Buddhism* which however has strange similarity with the Tāntric Sākta cult of Eastern India as we still find in the temple of Kāmākhyā (Kāmrup) in the Province of Assam. The similarity in the matter of the use of charms and drugs in Bengal with England seems apparent when we read Kavikankan's Chandikāvya and Shakespear's Macbeth, both of whom flourished in the 16th century, giving almost the same list of magic ingredients for the purpose of charming.¹ These formulas might have travelled to Europe from India at a very ancient time with the Indian Gypsies.

¹ See Kavikankan's Chandikāvya, pp. 136-37 :

“কঙ্কপের নখ আন কুন্তীরের দাঁত ।

কোটরের পেঁচা আন গোবিকার আঁত ॥” ইত্যাদি

Freedom of Women.—Women enjoyed perhaps greater freedom before the Mahomedan invasion. In Maynāmati songs we find the mother Maynāmati going to meet her son Rājā Govindachandra when he was transacting business in his court. The dowager queen dressed herself in a white Śāḍi, took a stick (made of hintālwood) in her hand as she was old and chewed scented betels when proceeding to the court.¹ We also find in the same songs the queens supply the ingredients which were to serve the purpose of collyrium to paint the eyes with.

Adunā and Padunā went to the house of an ordinary Bāniā named Nimāi on some business.² In the Dharmamangal songs which breathed Buddhistic sentiments, descriptions are found of women enjoying greater personal liberty in all the spheres of life including even the battle-field where they are found fighting side by side with their comrades of the opposite sex.³ Examples of free love between men and women are abundant in the Mymensingh Ballads, proving without doubt that women of all grades of the society commanded a greater freedom than in the days that followed.

(Bring the nails of tortoise, teeth of crocodile, an owl from its hole and the biles of lizard, etc.)

See also Bansidas's Manasamangal, p. 503.

“কাকড়ার বাম পাও উল্লুরের পিত।

পেচার বাঁও চক্ষের কর কাজল রঞ্জিত ॥” ইত্যাদি

(Bring the left leg of a crab, the biles of a rat, and the left eye of an owl to supply the ingredients which was to serve the purpose of collyrium to paint the eyes with. See the Witches, broth in Macbeth, which contains among many others things, eye of newt, adder's fork, maw of shark, wool of bat, scale of dragon, gall of goat, lizard's legs, and wings of owl.

Cf. The incantations of women in the Vedic age, who were afraid of their co-wives. Rigveda X. 145 and X. 149. See also the Atharvaveda.

¹ See Maynāmati songs :

“ধবল বজ্র নিল ময়না পরিধান করিয়া।

হিস্তানের লাঠি নিল হস্তে করিয়া।

• • • • •

পান খাইতে খাইতে বুড়ি ময়না যাচ্ছে চলিয়া।

• • • • •

দরবারেতে যাইয়া ময়না রূপহিত হৈল ॥”

² See the Maynamati songs.

³ See the Dharmamangal songs.

Garland and Sandal-paste (Mālāchandan).—In social gatherings it was the practice to offer garland and sandal-paste to the most respected guest present as a mark of honour. These could only be offered by the host himself and naturally most of the guests present in such a gathering jealously watched the conferring of the honour. Such gatherings often gave rise to bitterness amongst castemen who found it a suitable occasion to decry one another and tried to uphold the prestige of their respective families. In those days political activities were thrown into the background and social matters occupied the fore-front of public attention. A vivid description of Mālā-Chandan contest is to be found in Kavikankan Mukundarām's Chandikāvya, pp. 175-176.

Passport.—This document with the royal seal issued in former days was known as 'Berājpatra.' A kind of passport in the shape of 'Duri' or thread is found mentioned in the life of Mālādhār Basu of Kulingrām.¹ In the days of Chaitanya Dev, people intending to go to Puri on pilgrimage, had to pass through this village. The family of Rāmānanda to which Mālādhār Basu also belonged had the right of issuing passports to the pilgrims in the shape of a piece of thread. The pilgrim wore the thread on one of his arms.

Penance.—The penance 'Shale-Bhar'² (i.e., self-torture by impalement) was prevalent in the pre-Mahomedan days. A devotee practising this penance was inspired with the belief that he would thereby win the choicest favours of the god he worshipped. In the Dhar-mamangal songs it is mentioned that the queen Ranjābati got a son (the famous Lāusen) by practising this penance.

Fondness for the dog.—This animal which is now regarded as untouchable by the orthodox Hindus and Mahomedans was pet at least in the twelfth century. In Manikchandra Rājār Gān it has been described that when Raja Govinda Chandra left his palace with

¹ See Chaitanya-Charitāmrita, p. 176 and Bangabhāṣā-O-Sahitya, p. 152.

² See Dharma-rāj-gīt by Narasingha Basu.

“চাপায়ে ধ্বন আমি শালে দিলাম ভর ।

সামুল্যার উপদেশ ধর্ম দিলা বর ॥”

(When I, Ranjāvati, got myself impaled at Chāpāi to get a son by the advice of the priestess Sāmulyā the god Dharma granted me the desired boon.)

ascetic's vow, his birds, cows, elephants and dogs were so much moved that they set up wailing for him. His favourite dogs which were no less than hundred and eighty in number¹ threw themselves at his feet as if much moved over his imminent departure. Again in the same place we find that 'these one hundred and eighty dogs were not only favoured in our homes, but received regular training if they happened to belong to rich masters.'² Dogs in those days served also the purpose of keeping watch over a house. Hāṇi Siddhā, the Guru of Govindachandra, made arrangements for the maintenance of a pair of formidable dogs to prevent the Rājā from entering the houses of his subjects for alms, by way of testing the strength of asceticism of that monarch. These dogs were named 'Hāpān and Jhāpān.'³ The naming of dogs was another peculiarity of those days. They often indicated the nature of the animal, for instance, Hāpān signifies quick-breathing and Jhāpān jumping.

All these prove the popularity of dogs in ancient Bengal suggesting a coincidence with the place of the animal in the present European society.

Likeness for Luxuriant hair.—In the Mahomedan period the Hindus used to keep their hair long, a custom inherited by them from their forefathers.⁴ It is, however, interesting to trace the change of national taste in this direction from time immemorial to the present day. With the arrival of the Mahomedans in this

¹ “নও বড়ি কুত্তা কান্দে চরণত পড়িয়া”

Mānikchandra Rājār Gān.

² “শিকারী খেলাইতে কান্দে নও বড়ি কুকুর”

Ibid.

³ “হাপান কাপান হিলাল কুকুর”

Ibid.

⁴ See *Manasā Mangal* by Bijay Gupta (P. S. Gupta's ed.), p. 196.

“দীর্ঘভুজ লক্ষ্মীন্দর দীর্ঘ মাথার চুল”

(Lakshmindra possessing large arms had also long hair.)

See also the *Rāmāyana* by Krittivās (Laukākāṇḍa).

“পলায় রামের সৈন্য নাহি বাঁধে চুল”

(The soldiers of Rāma fled so hastily that they could not find time to tie up their hair).

country, the test changed and our people began to imitate the ruling race. They began to cut the hair to a shorter length allowing it just to touch their shoulders and this fashion came to be known as 'Bābri.' Thus the art of hair-dressing, specially plaiting, received a partial check so far as it concerned men, the fair sex keeping up the old practice down to the present day. The Bābri also came into disfavour sometime after the advent of the Europeans in this land. The Europeans themselves were fond of keeping long plaited hair and using wigs in the 18th century. But it is not within our scope to trace how and when this fashion changed in England giving place to the practice now prevailing, bringing about, as it did, a corresponding change amongst Europeans in India. We may, with some degree of accuracy, assume that it was due to the Civil war of 1648 which was responsible for this change. At that time the Puritan anti-Royalists cropped their hair short to demonstrate their hatred against the cavaliers who used to keep long hair, a practice which won for them the special epithet of roundheads, a term by which they were latterly came to be known. The English and other European nations imitated the new fashion discarding the old practice. The Bengalis gradually grew accustomed to the fashion introduced by the ruling race. Therefore quite contrary to their tradition, the young generation of Bengal keep longer hair in front of their heads and in many cases the hair at the back is actually cut off exposing the skin, in imitation of the European fashion.

CHAPTER II

SHIP-BUILDING AND COMMERCE

In ancient Bengal ship-building reached a high degree of perfection and the sea-going vessels used to be actively engaged in promoting the prosperity of the country by conducting commercial intercourse with various places both within and outside India.

The wood required for the construction of ships was teak, gāmbhāri, tamāl, piāl, kāṭhāl, etc. But it seems that the wood

of the fabled tree Manapaban was best for the purpose. In the earliest times, the word Manapaban implied the extreme speed of a vessel, compared with the flight of the mind and the wind, and we have a text in the Mahābhārata,¹ ‘মনোমারুতগামিনীম্,’² to shew this. But latterly it seems that a certain species of wood was identified with Manapaban, the exact nature of which is not known.

In building a vessel the first work to be done was a ceremony known as ‘Dārābindhā’ or the thrusting of a gold nail (Sonārjal) to the keel (Dārā) with the help of a silver hammer (Hātur). It was done by the owner himself. After this ceremony, the actual work of construction was to begin. First a measurement of the vessel was taken. Then the keel was to be carefully constructed with which strong pieces of timber were joined with the help of iron nails. Next the ‘Galui’ (prow) was to be built. This finished construction of the hold of a vessel. The deck, the Pātātari (pieces of timber joined to the keel) and the shed were also made. After these, the construction of helm and rudders, and decoration work made the building of a ship complete.³ It may be noted that the prow took the appearance of a peacock or a Śuka bird or some other fancy shape specified in the works on art and the ships were accordingly known as ‘Mayurpankhi,’ ‘Śukapankhi,’ etc. Mention of seven types of prows representing the shapes of a lion, a buffalo, a serpent, an elephant, a tiger and a bird is found in old Sanskrit works on ship-building, such as Juktikalpataru by King-Bhoja.⁴

1

ততঃ প্রবাসিতো বিদ্বান্ বিজুরেণ নরত্তদা ।

পার্থানাং দর্শয়ামাস মনোমারুতগামিনীম্ ॥

সর্পবাস্তসহাং নাবং যন্তযুক্তং পতাকিনীম্ ।

শিবে ভাগীরথীতীরে নরৈর্বিপ্রংসিভিঃ কৃতাম্ ॥

—মহাভারত, আদিপর্ব ।

¹ For the construction of vessels see also Chandidas’ Śrīkṛṣṇa Kīrtan (p. 140) edited by Basantarānjan Roy and published by the Bangiya Sāhitya Parishad.

² See also Visvakosh, Vol. X, p. 461. In ancient Europe also the prows of the vessels represented various models. See the figure of the old attic ship in the Dipylon Vase (British Museum) and Roman galleys in Trajan’s column Rostrata.

³ See the pictorial representation of the landing of Vijaya in Ceylon in Ajantā cave paintings (R. K. Mukherjee’s—A History of Indian Shipping and Maritime Activity, .

A vivid description of the construction of a vessel is found in the *Manasāmangal* by Bangsidas (D. Chakravarti's ed., p. 286). An idea of this is given below :—

The lord of Champaka (the merchant Chand) constructed some vessels for which he himself performed the ceremony of gold-nailing (Sonār-jal or Jalai). The length of the vessel was fixed at a thousand yards (more than half a mile, evidently an exaggeration). From the keel to the central deck the height was six cubits and a half (thirteen Tāl) which was designed to stabilize the equilibrium of a ship. The bamboo-poles required to set a ship in motion where the water was shallow were also measured with thread. More serious work, however, commenced with the construction of the hold of a ship. The wood ordinarily chosen for the purpose was known as 'Manapaban,' noted for imparting the swiftness of the wind or of a wish to the ship. Strong pieces of this timber were joined together with the help of iron nails. In this way the construction of the hold was completed. When it was finished the metallic sheets (piṭh-pāt) were fitted and the mat doors (jāp) fixed up. Then 'Māthākāṣṭha,' or 'Galui' (prow) was made, decorated with flowers of gold and silver. The principal cabin was built, after the deck, composed of wooden planks, had been fitted up (Pāṭātan). This chief cabin (Rāighar) was beautifully decorated with rows of artificial flower-garlands. On the vessel the mast (Mālum wood) was duly fitted. The helm (Pātwāl) and its auxiliary piece of timber (Jhokābari) were not forgotten. When these had been finished, a nicely ornamented shed was built on the ship. It had rows of Chāmar (chowrie) and festoons of various types which made the vessel look pretty. Finally, the eyes of the figure on the prow of the ship were made with jewels resembling the moon. This completed the building of the ship.¹

A similar description of ships as found in Kavikankan's *Chandī-kāvya*, pp. 221-222, Bangabasi edition), is given below :—

"Seven 'ḍiṅgās' or vessels were built by Biswakarmā and his son Dārubrahmā with the assistance of Hanumāna. The mighty hero

p. 44). See also the sculptures from the Sanchi Stupas (R. K. Mukherjee's above work, pp. 33-34). The Chinese Junk (Commercial Museum, Philadelphia) as told by Marco Polo (*Periplus of the Erythraean Sea*, 247), published by Longmans Green and Co.) may also be mentioned in this connection.

¹ Cf. Nelson's Flagship 'the Victory' in the battle of Trafalgar.

Hanumāna began to saw the wood of various denominations, such as 'Śāl,' 'tāl,' 'kāṭhāl,' 'peāl,' 'gāmbhāri' and 'tamāl.' The architect Dārubrahmā in the meantime made the nails. They made beautiful vessels, each of which was hundred yards in length and twenty yards in breadth. The prow of each vessel resembled the head of a Makara fish. It was made of ivory and the eye-balls were of precious gems. First, the ship 'Madhukara' was constructed. In its central part there was the 'Rāighar' containing 'Rājāsan'—the principal cabin for the merchant. A nook was reserved for the helmsman and the back part as the strong room for keeping treasures. There was also a mast on the vessel. The Daṇḍa-kewāl or oars were made of jack and teak wood and a helm was fitted to the prow of each vessel. The seven vessels were named :—*

1. Madhukara (the Bee)—The flagship.
2. Guārekhi (Its prow resembled the head of a lion).
3. Ranajayā (the victory).¹
4. Ranabhimā (the Terrible in war).
5. Mahākāyā (the Titanic).¹
6. Sarbadharā (the All-Container).
7. Nāṭṣālā (the Amusement Hall).²

The following were the principal parts of a vessel :—

1. Dāra (helm) or pātwāl³.
2. Mālurakāṣṭha (the mast).

¹ Cf. the famous ship 'Titanic' of the White Star Line Company.

² In spite of exaggerated descriptions of our poets, these vessels containing amusement hall, as in 'Nāṭṣālā' and containing everything as in the 'All-Container' of the list of Kavikankan as also Ajayselpāt and Pakshirāj of the list of Vijay Gupta mentioned later on, may be compared with the present-day ships of the other civilised countries of the world.

³ Dāra in the present dialect of the countryside means an oar, but in our older works it has often times the meaning given above.

* দেবকার বিশ্বকর্মা, তার সূত দারুভাঙ্গা,
শিরে ধরি চণ্ডিকার পাণ ।
চারি প্রহর রাতি, আলিয়া যুতের বাতি,
সাত ডিঙ্গা করয়ে নির্দাণ ॥

These names are still used to convey the meanings they did in ancient Bengal. It would be interesting for the purpose of comparative study to find out if some of these technical names were analogous to those used in other parts of India in the literature of ship-building.

In the description given above, we find elaborate details of the different parts of a ship built in those days. Exaggerated descriptions are, however, apparent in the writings of Bijay Gupta and some of the poets of the latter-day Manasā cult, when ship-building as an art was practically abandoned in Bengal. But though there is much of legends in the stories, the old traditions were not altogether lost sight of. Ships of considerable tonnage for commercial purposes were surely still being constructed.¹ The descriptions of voyages often go to show that ships of very large size used to be constructed in Bengal even if sufficient allowances are made for poetic imaginations.² In Bijay Gupta's *Manasāmangal* (Pearysankar Gupta's ed.) we find the following):

"First was launched the Madhukara. On board this ship, the millionaire Chānd took his quarters. It was followed by the ship 'Biju-siju.' This was so big that it broke the crooked projections of the banks on either side levelling them as she moved on. Then followed the 'Guārekhi.' Sae was so high that the City of Lanka situated at a long distance, was visible from its deck. After her came

¹ See Kavikankan, p. 220. (If 100 carpenters worked for a whole year, only one vessel could be constructed.) Also see Banśidas, p. 285. (1,600 carpenters cut the branches of the Manpaban tree and piled them up in rows.) See also p. 282. (By the command of the king the Chief Engineer Giribar and the Admiral Gopal started with 1,600 carpenters.)

² See Turnour's *Mahāwanso*. In this book we come across the following: "Prince Bijay and his followers were sent away by King Sinhabāhu of Bengal (on board a ship) which was so large as to accommodate full seven hundred passengers." According to this work the ship in which Bijay's Pandyan bride was brought over to Ceylon was of a very large size, having the capacity to accommodate 18 Officers of State, 75 menial servants and a number of slaves besides the princess herself and seven hundred other virgins who accompanied her. (See Radhakumud Mukherjee's—*A History of Indian Shipping and Maritime Activity*, pp. 157-162; also pp. 163-164). See also 'Bangalir Bal' by Rajendralal Acharyya, p. 22; and the copper-plate grants found in East Bengal for Bengali docks and harbours of ancient times. See for the above 'The Indian Antiquary,' Vol. XX, pp. 44-45. (3 copper-plate grants from East Bengal, by F. E. Pargiter.) See 'Bangalir Bal,' p. 39, and J.R.A.S., 1895, p. 525.

'Bhārār-Paṭua,' dancers were on board this ship. She was followed by Śankhachur (the shell-crowned). Her sides seemed to touch two opposite banks of big rivers and her bottom the ground under water. Next started 'Ajayśelpāt' (the invincible steel-bottomed). There was an arrangement for a big fair in this ship. Then came up the 'Udaytārā' (the morning-star). Her length was so extraordinarily large that when half the portion was exposed to rain the other half enjoyed sun-shine. Then sailed the 'Tiāṭhūṭi' (or the parrot-beaked). She was filled with merchandise, such as jute and coarse blankets, etc. Then followed the 'Dhabal' or (the white). She moved slowly and often stopped on account of her great bulk. After every stoppage she was to be set in motion by sacrificing a hundred goats. Then sailed the 'Kedār,' or the great god Śiva. Before reaching the shore the ship had to be worshipped with incense and 'Panchapradīp' as is done in a temple when performing the evening service.¹ Then came the 'Pakshirāj,' or (the Prince of Birds). Many fruit trees of considerably large size were there for the use of the people on board the ship. Then was launched the 'Bhīmākṣa' or (the fierce-eyed). This vessel carried fourteen lakhs of conch-shells. This was followed by the vessel 'ankhatāli' or (the treasure of shells). Her principal parts were made of sandal wood. Behind her sailed the vessel 'Ājlā-kājlā.' She used to devour a hundred goats at every turn of the river (meaning that its size was so big that at every turn its motion had to be ensured by sacrificing 100 goats). Thus one after another the ships proceeded to the Gangāsāgar.²

¹ The popular notion of the old Bengalis about the ships being endowed with life bears a striking similarity to the notion of the people of ancient Europe. We learn in Grote's History of Greece (London, John Murray, 2nd edn., Vol. I, p. 214) the following:—"Argus, the son of Phryscus, directed by the promptings of Athenē, built the ship inserting in the prow a piece of timber, from the celebrated oak of Dodona, which was endowed with the faculty of speech." See also Apollon. Rhod., 525; IV, 580. Apollodor. i, 9, 16. Cf. the death of Iphigenia, daughter of Agamemnon of Homer's Iliad.

The following descriptions found in the *Manasāmangal* by Bansi-dās (D. Chakravorti's ed.), p. 288, may also be noted :—

“The first vessel which Chānd launched on water was Madhu-kara. Its deck was filled with earth, so that it took the appearance of land on which a small town with markets was set up. The fore-deck was reserved for worship. A tank of fresh water was there with aquatic plants on its surface to keep it cool and with fish of various descriptions. A vegetable and a flower-garden completed the outfit of this wonderful ship.” The merchant Chānd ascertained the cost of this ship to be fourteen lakhs of ‘tankās’ as may be gathered from what he had said to his treasurer Govinda. He furthermore said that the merchandise on board this ship was worth the same amount.’

তার পাছে বাওয়াইল ডিঙ্গা নামে বিছুসিঙ্ঘ ।
 গঙ্গার দুইকূল ভাঙ্গিয়া বেকা করে উজ্জ ।
 তার পাছে বাওয়াইল ডিঙ্গা নামে গুয়ারেবী ।
 যার উপরে চড়িয়া রাবণের লঙ্কা দেখি ॥
 তার পাছে বাওয়াইল ডিঙ্গা ভাঙ্গারপাটুয়া ।
 যেই নায় উঠাইয়া লইল তামিলের নাটুয়া ॥
 তার পাছে বাওয়াইল ডিঙ্গা নামে শঙ্খচূড় ।
 সমুদ্রের দুইকূল ভাঙ্গে পাতালে ঠেকে মুড় ॥
 তার পাছে বাওয়াইল ডিঙ্গা অজয়শেলপাট ।
 যাহার উপরে মিলিয়াছে শ্রীকলার হাট ॥
 তার পাছে বাওয়াইল ডিঙ্গা নামে উদয়তারা ।
 অনেক নায় ঝড়বৃষ্টি অনেক নায় ধরা ॥
 তার পাছে বাওয়াইল ডিঙ্গা নামে টিয়াঠুটা ।
 যেই নায় ভরে সাধু পাট আর ভুটি ॥

—বিজয় গুপ্তের মনসামঙ্গল ।

মাটি ভরাভরি সব করিল স্তম্ভার ।
 হাটঘাট বসাইল সহর বাজার ॥

চান্দ বলে শুন ভাই গোবিন্দভাণ্ডারী ।
 চৌদ লক্ষ টাকা যে নায়ের মূল্য করি ॥
 আর চৌদলক্ষের বেসানি লহ নাও ।
 নৌকা লয়া ভাগী সাজি স্থানে স্থানে যাও ॥

—বংশীদাসের মনসামঙ্গল, পৃ: ২৮৮ ।

Another description found in the same work, p. 319, is given below :—

“ First started Sankhachūḍa followed by Chhatighati (the ship of wares) which was filled with earthen-wares. Then Kājalrekhi (lined with collyrium), Durgābar (the boon of the goddess), Durgā and Mānikyameruā (the diamond-crowned) sailed one after another. The last was so big that it had to be driven by sixteen hundred oarsmen. Then proceeded Āgal-pāgal (the mad), Rājāballabha (the favourite of the king), Hansakhal (the Royal duck) and Sāgarphenā (the sea-foam), one behind the other. The last one was filled with soldiers of Kalinga. Behind these ships came Udaygiri (the mountain of the rising sun), followed by Laksmipāsā (the abode of the harvest goddess). In the latter ship the priest Subhāi established himself with all the requisites for worshipping Haragauri. The next two vessels were Udaytārā (the morning-star) and Gangaprasād (the favour of the Ganges). The last one of the fourteen ships was the flagship Madhukara, the Bee, which was the best of the lot. In this ship the merchant Chānd, the lord of the fleet, had his quarters with his five advisers. During the voyage the crew sang Sāri songs (a kind of chorus) all the while.¹

১ হুলাই বলে বাও বাও বন্দিয়া চণ্ডিকার পাও
প্রথমে মিলিল শঙ্খচূড় ।
ছোটখাট তার পাছে যে নায়ে ভরিয়া আছে
হাড়ীপাগ ধুরা বিস্তর ॥
তবে সে কাঁজলরেখী দেখিতে জুড়ায় আঁখি
চতুর্থে মিলিল হুর্গাবর ॥
মাণিক্য-মেরুয়া নায়ে ষোলশত দাঁড় বায়ে
তার শেষে আগল-পাগল ।
তবে ত রাজবল্লভ রাজহংস ভরাসব
অষ্টমে মিলিল হংসখল ॥
নবমে সাগরফেনা যে নায়ে কলিঙ্গলনা
তার শেষে মিলে উদয়গিরি ।
একাদশে লক্ষীপাশা যে নায়ে সুমাইর বাসা
নিত্য বাতে পূজে হরগৌরী ॥

Another description from the Chandikāvya by Kavikankan Mukundarām, p. 191, is given below :—

First was recovered from water the ship Madhukara. Its drawing-room was made of pure gold. Then came the turn of Durgābar. It was full of gābars or sailors. Then came to sight the ship 'Guārekhi.' Her mast (Mālumwood) might be seen from a distance of six miles. Another ship which rose up was the Sankhachudā. Her breadth was eighty yards. Another ship named Chandrapāl was now recovered from the depth of water. When sailing, her sides touched both the banks of the river. The seventh and the last vessel was Chhatimati which carried rice.¹

উদয়তারা ছাদশে গঙ্গাপ্রসাদ তার শেবে
চতুর্দশে মিলে মধুকর ।

পঞ্চপাত্র সঙ্গে করি বসিয়াছে অধিকারী
যে নায়ে আপনি চন্দ্রধর ॥

চৌদ্দ ডিঙ্গা বাইয়া যায় পাইক সবে সাইর গার
তোল পাড় গোজরী সাগর ।

ডিঙ্গা সব চলে স্বাটে ছইকুলে প্রজার ঠাটে
ঘির্জ বংশী মনসা-কিঙ্করে ॥

বংশীদাসের মনসামঙ্গল, পৃঃ ৩১২ ।

- 1 প্রথমে তুলিল ডিঙ্গা নামে মধুকর ।
সুবর্ণেতে বান্ধা যার বৈঠকির ঘর ॥
তবে ডিঙ্গা তুলিলেন নামে হুর্গাবর ।
আখণ্ড চাপিয়া তাতে বসিল পাবর ॥
তবে ডিঙ্গাখান তোলে নামে গুয়ারেখী ।
ছই প্রহরের পথে যার মালুমকাঠ দেখি ॥
আর ডিঙ্গাখান তোলে নামে শঙ্খচূড় ।
আশীগজ পানীভাঙ্গে গানের ছকুল ॥
আর ডিঙ্গা তুলিলেন নামে চন্দ্রপাল ।
যাহার গমনে ছইকুল করে আল ॥

In the midst of the evidently exaggerated descriptions of the poets about big vessels we sometimes come across accounts of smaller crafts in our old literature. We find in Bansidās (p. 320), for example the following :—“The admiral Gopāl who sailed first had with him forty-two small boats (hāt-nāo). The mode of construction of the river-boats and that of sea-going ships are now precisely the same as we read about them in our old literature and the nomenclature adopted in the past was on the whole the same as we use it now. It seems that the sea-going ships and the river-crafts were built on the same principle. Even the other day a coasting vessel named the Āminākhātun and its sister-vessels of considerable tonnage were built by a merchant of Chittagong with the help of local carpenters and mechanics and the method of building adopted for the purpose appears to be the same as was done in the past. So far as their build and speed are concerned, these ships were perhaps not inferior to those used in England in the days of Nelson. A point of coincidence, *i.e.*, of keeping a flagship in the mercantile marine as we find in the navy of the civilised world to-day is indeed curious. The numbers of ships, *i.e.* seven and fourteen, which the merchants of old generally adopted in completing a fleet were perhaps due to the notion that these numbers were auspicious. A merchant before undertaking a voyage used to perform certain ceremonies.¹

The following among others constituted the crew of a ship :—

1. Gābar (sailors, consisting of two classes) : (a) Mānjhi or oarsmen, (b) Dāri or Karnadhār (helmsmen).
2. Sutradhar or Carpenter.
3. Karmakār or blacksmith.
4. Pāik or foot-soldiers.
5. Dubāri or diver.
6. Mirbahar or admiral.
7. Kārikar or craftsmen.
8. Kārāri or helmsman and captain.

আর ডিঙ্গা তুলিলেন নামে ছোটমটি ।

বাহে ভরা দিল চলু বায়ান পউটি ॥

—কবিকঙ্কণ, পৃঃ ১২১

¹ See Sen's Folk-literature of Bengal, Calcutta University, pp. 73-75.

Gābar,—a sailor. The caste from which boatmen were generally recruited is still known as Gābar in Bengal. They were exceptionally sturdy and the term 'Gāithyārgābar,' applied to them, signifies great physical strength. The sailors used to sing a chorus called Sari when plying their oars.¹ The sailors were mainly recruited from East Bengal.²

Sutradbar,—carpenter. Carpenters' services were required for repairs and the joining of parts; these carpenters supplied the necessary crew corresponding to an Engineering staff maintained on board a modern ship. Carpenters were essential for European ships when steamships were not in vogue.

Karmakār,—blacksmith. Blacksmiths were engaged in building a ship and as their services were considered indispensable, they were taken on board the ships.

Pāik,—foot-soldiers. They were taken in perhaps owing to insecurity of the age, to protect merchandise from any possible attacks of pirates or hostile foreigners.³ Mention is found of the Telugu soldiers employed by the Bengalis in the Manasā-Mangal and the Dharma-mangal poems.

Dubāri,—divers. They accompanied the sea-going merchant vessels to ascertain if there was anything wrong in that part of a vessel which remained under the water.⁴

Mirbahar,—admiral. It is an abbreviation of the Arabic term Amir-al-Bahar, meaning an admiral of a fleet. The admirals would not only accompany warships but also armed merchantmen as appears from the description of Chānd's voyage for trade. In Bansidās we find Admiral Gopāl accompanying the carpenters in their voyage in quest of Manapaban wood perhaps to guard them against any possible attack, a precaution which was considered necessary to provide against insecure sea-voyage.

From the descriptions that one comes across in the works of our poets it appears that the merchandise carried in Bengali vessels was

¹ See Satyanārāyanar Panthi, edited by Abdul Karim and Manasāmangal poems.

² See Kavikankan, pp. 198 and 207-8. The Gābars used 'Danda (helm), Danda Kerwāls (oars), Bansakerwāls (bamboo-poles) and Fāns (chords) to ply the vessels. See Kavikankan, pp. 195, 227, 194, 228, 207, 229, 234, 236.

³ See Bansidās, p. 329.

⁴ See Bansidās, p. 329.

mainly intended for export to Pātan and Singhal. A system of barter was generally resorted to and fraud¹ played by the Bengali merchants on foreigners of questionable civilization, furnished a stock of humour and fun to our poets, on which all of them wrote in the same strain. We find occasional mention of merchandise, wherein the prices are sometimes ludicrously exaggerated, for during the time when these works were written, sea-voyage was reduced to a vague tradition in which facts and fiction were hopelessly blended together. Still we give below two lists which may be found interesting as they no doubt contain some elements of truth. According to Bansidās, it was the Bengali merchants who introduced cocoanuts and betels in some foreign countries, but this seems to be a myth.

First List.

Items of Bengali Merchandise.	Articles of foreign countries.
(1) Betel-leaves 'in exchange of	Ten emeralds for each leaf.
(2) Betel-nut „	Ten gems.
(3) Lime „	Quick-silver.
(4) Catechew „	Gorachanā (a bright yellow pigment).
(5) Cardamom „	Pearl.
(6) Satāhari Kameswar (<i>Asparagus racemosus</i>) „	Musk.
(7) Fruits „	Golden bricks, bells, etc.
(8) Vegetable-roots „	Diamond.
(9) Pulses „	Corals.
(10) Onions and garlies „	Maces.
(11) Camphor „	'Bākhar.'
(12) Water-weeds „	Diamond.
(13) <i>Dolichos gladiatus</i> (<i>Mākhanā</i>) „	Ruby.
(14) Goats and sheep „	Gold.
(15) Radish „	Ivory.
(16) Dry fish „	Sandal-wood.
(17) Sugarcane „	Royal maces (nabadanda, symbol of royalty).
(18) Jute „	Chowrie (Chāmar).

¹ See the *Chandikāvya* by Kavikankan (the character of Murāriçila) and the story of *Çankhamālā* by D. B. Majumdar.

SHIP-BUILDING AND COMMERCE

23

Items of Bengali Merchandise.

- (19) Wooden utensils in exchange of
- (20) Wooden furniture „
- (21) Earthenwares „
- (22) Oil and clarified butter „
- (23) Kumkum „
- (24) Poppy „

etc.

Articles of foreign countries.

- Gold and Silver utensils.
- Golden furniture.
- Bell-metal utensils.
- Quick-silver.
- Jarful of honey.
- String of gold-bell.

etc.

For a reference to the above list, see *Bansidās*, pp. 380-390, 392-393 (D. Chakravorti's ed.).¹

Second List.

Items of Bengali Merchandise.

1. Deer in exchange of
2. 'Biranga' „
3. Suntha „
4. Ape „
5. Pigeon „
6. Fruits „
7. Bahara „
8. Jute „
9. Glass „
10. Sea-salt „
11. Dhuti (cloth) „
12. Oyster-shell „
13. Haritāl „
14. 'Joāni' „
15. "Chuā" „
16. Sheep „

Articles of foreign countries.

- Horse.
- Clove.
- Tanka—a kind of wood apple,
Peronia Elephantum.
- Elephant.
- Suā (a bristly Caterpillar).
- "Jāyfal."
- Betel-nut.
- White Chowrie (Chāmar).
- Emerald.
- Rock-salt.
- Pots.
- Pearl.
- Diamond.
- "Yirā."
- Sandal-paste.
- Horse.

আগে আনি গুয়াপান, থুইলেক বিজ্ঞমান,
মূল্য বলে কাড়ারী ছলাই।
একটা একটা পাণে, মরকত দশগুণে,
গুয়াতে মাণিক্য যেন পাই ॥

See Kavikankan Mukundaram's *Chandi-Kāvya*, p. 191—*Dhanapati's* exchange of merchandise in Ceylon.' The exchange of commodities seems to be somewhat more reasonable than that to be found in *Bansidās*.

It is to be noted that there was a time when glass used to be exported from India. We learn the following in the *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea*, pp. 220-221 (by W. H. Schoff, A.M., Longmans Green & Co., 1912).

"The origin of the glass industry in India is uncertain. According to Mitra, *Antiquities of Orissa*, I, 101, it was made in Ceylon in the 3rd century B. C. and Pliny (XXXVI, 66) refers to the glass of India as superior to all others, because 'made of pounded crystal.' Mirrors, with a foil of lead and tin, were largely used at the time of the *Periplus*, and Pliny indicates (XXXVII, 20) that 'the people of India, by colouring crystal, have found a method of imitating various precious stones, Beryls in particular.' An early play, the *Mrichhakatika*, or *Little Clay-Cart*, describes a scene in a court of justice to this effect (Mitra, 100; see also A. W. Ryder's translation, Cambridge, 1905)."

বদল করিতে চুণ, রস দিবা দশগুণ,

খয়্যার বদলে গোরচনা ।

সুগন্ধী এলাচি হালী, লহ মতির বদলি,

কেসর বদলে দিবা সোণা ॥

শতাবরী কামেশ্বর, আনি বলে সঙ্গাগর,

এর গুণ কহিতে না পারি ।

খাইয়া বুঝহ আগে, কিমত আস্বাদ লাগে,

তৌলি দিবা বদলে কস্তুরী ॥ ইত্যাদি ।

—বংশীদাসের *মনসামঙ্গল*, পৃ: ৩৮০-৩৯০ ও ৩৯২-৩৯৩ ।

কুরঙ্গ বদলে, তুরঙ্গ পাব,

নারিকেল বদলে শঙ্খ ।

বিড়ঙ্গ বদলে, লবঙ্গ পাব,

তুণ্ডের বদলে টঙ্ক ।

The Bengali merchants usually carried on trade with Ceylon and Pātan in Guzrat and visited the following ports :

1. Puri.
2. Kalinga or Kalingapatam.
3. Chilkāchuli or Chicācole in the Madras Presidency.
4. Bānpur.
5. Setubandha Rāmeswar.
6. City of Lankā (in Ceylon).
7. Nilaccā or Laccadives.
8. Pātan (in Guzrat).

One of the chief places outside India visited by the Bengali merchants was the Laccadives. Mention is found also of Pralamba, Nākut, Aheelankā, Chandrasalya island and Ābartana island which we cannot identify but which undoubtedly lay outside our country. A vivid description of the coasting voyage of the Bengali vessels from Saptagrām (an inland port of Bengal) to Pātan in Guzrat by doubling the Cape Comorin, is found in the Manasāmangal poems of Bansidās. In the Chandikāvya of Kavikāṇkan Mukundarām we find accounts of mercantile adventurers of Bengal related in glowing terms. The lists of ports, both Indian and foreign, and the conditions of sea-voyage tally in both these works.

In Bansidās we find the following description of the voyage of Chānd, the merchant. In spite of poetic fancy and exaggeration, a rough idea of the sea-routes and ports may be gleaned from it.

“The merchant started for south Pātan. There were great celebrations and festivities at the city of Champaka. All the ships started one after another. At the head of the vanguard was admiral

লবঙ্গ বদলে, মাস্তুল পাব,
 পায়রা বদলে গুয়া ।
 পাটশন বদলে, ধবল চামর পাব,
 কাচের বদলে নীলা ।
 লবন বদলে, সৈন্ধব পাব,
 জোয়ানী বদলে ছিরা ॥

ইত্যাদি ।

—কবিকঙ্কণের চণ্ডীকাব্য, পৃ: ১২১

Gopāl with forty-two small vessels. After leaving his own territory Chānd passed through the following places in succession : Kāmārhāti, Madhyānagar, Pratāpgarh, Gopālpur and Rāmnagar. He then reached Kalidāh-Sāgar which he crossed leaving to the right Gandharvapūr and Birnagar to the left. Then the merchant reached the mouths of the Ganges after passing through Kāmeswar, Mādarerthānā, Pichaltā and Rāmbishnupuri one after another. At Gangāsagar Chānd performed worship and sacrificed goats. After leaving Champaknagar the ships were on the voyage for five months. The merchant passed through many difficult places after having reached the sea. He passed through Utkal and Kalinga on his right. Crabs, lobsters, leeches and crocodiles obstructed his passage through the malice of Manasa Devi. At last the merchant reached the golden Lankā surrounded by golden walls. Chānd here saw the Rākshasa king and received his pass-port before proceeding further. Then he left Lankā on his right and passed the Mālaya mountain near Cape Comorin. He also passed Bijaynagar (Ceylonese?) then ruled by King Ahi. The next important place which the merchant visited was Parasurāmtirtha. Leaving this place the merchant reached the vast sea known as the Nilaccār-bunk (*lit.* bend of sea near Nilacca—perhaps Laccadives). Reaching this sea the crew felt giddy as they heard the deep sound of the waves which rose as high as mountains. They almost lost their way but through the expert direction of Captain Dulāi the vessels were steered properly. It was by looking at the stars that Dulāi could keep to the right direction. After much trouble, the merchant Chānd and his companions reached the city of Pātan, then ruled by King Chandraketu.¹

On Chānd's way back from Pātan, he crossed the Laccadives, then passed the Vindhya-ranges, Lankā, Setubandha-Rāmeswar and reached Kālidāh-sāgar where he experienced a heavy storm.²

The above description leads us to the conclusion that Pātan, once a celebrated city in Guzrat, was frequented by the merchants of Bengal who reached the place by sea crossing the Bay of Bengal, part of the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea. The voyage was probably a coasting one and Ceylon which stood midway between Bengal and Guzrat by the sea-route, was a favourite place of commerce for the merchants of Bengal. Pātan is not an inland city similar

¹ See Bansidas, pp. 318-339.

² See Bansidas, pp. 396-399.

to Tāmrālipti or Tamluk which was once one of the most important seaports of Bengal. Though Pātan means a city yet the frequent mention of this particular Pātan and the way leading to it, makes us think that it is no other than the Pātan or Somnath Pātan of Guzrat, not a fanciful creation of our poets.¹

চলে সাধু দক্ষিণ পাটনে ।
চম্পক নগর মিলি, কোতুকেতে হলাহলি,
জয়ধ্বনি উঠিল গগনে ॥
হুলাই বলে বাও বাও, বন্দিয়া ভবানী পাও,
প্রথমে চলিল শঙ্খচূড় ।
ছোটিঘটা তার পাছে, যাতে ভরা ভরিয়াছে,
হাঁড়োপাগ ধুকুড়া বিস্তর ॥

*

*

গোপাল মিরবর চলে ঠাট আশুয়ান ।
তার সঙ্গে হাত নাও ব্যাল্লিশ খান ॥
পানী চরি আগে চলে ব্যাল্লিশ নাও ।
ঠাট পাছে চন্দ্রধর বলে বাও বাও ॥
নিজরাজ্য ছাড়াইল হস্ত পরিহাসে ।
ছাড়ায় কামারহাটা আখির নিমিষে ॥
মধ্যনগর কুল দক্ষিণে থুইয়া ।
হুজুর প্রতাপগড় ছাড়ায় বাহিয়া ॥
ছাড়ায় গোপালপুর রামনগর ।
বাহিয়া আসিয়া পড়ে কালীদমাগর ॥
ডাইনে গন্ধর্ব্বপুর বামে বীরাসনা ।
কামেশ্বর বাইয়া যায় মান্দারের থানা ॥
পিচলতা বামে রাখি যায় তাড়াতাড়ি ।
সম্মুখে নগর দেখে রামবিক্রপুরি ॥
হরষিত হৈয়া পুছে রাজা চন্দ্রধর ।
স্বরূপে কহরে তাই একার নগর ॥
প্রজা সবে বলে রাজ্য শ্রীরাম রাজার ।
ডাকাচুরি নাহি এথা কোন পাপাচার

It seems our merchants used to frequent the islands and ports of the Bay of Bengal to which reference has already been made in this Chapter.

The following description is to be found in Bijay Gupta's *Manasā Mangal* (N. M. Sen Gupta's ed., pp. 194-195) :

"Oh merchants, listen. In the north King Mukteswar reigns. It is very difficult to comprehend the ways of his people. They take the seeds of pepper for rice. The king of the east is known as Bidyāsanga. The greater the bulk of the person the more the respect is shown to him. The people are all degraded and the social customs are in a most pitiable condition. Marriage-laws are not at all strict as brothers often exchange their wives. Even a brother marries his sister in that land. The women enjoy complete freedom and use coloured cloth especially to cover the breast. Caste-system is not observed at all. In the west the people are barbarous. They bore their ears, seldom observe any caste distinction and use ornaments on the neck. They do not give the girls in marriage unless they are sixteen and even then they put the married girl for some time in the priest's house in lieu of his fee. A married girl even keeps the house of her husband's sister's husband. In case of any child being born, it shares the property on both sides.¹ Now hear the condition of Pātan or the South Pātan. Its king is Bikram Kesari. The people of this land are very rich. They keep jars full of gems. In their land conch-shells, pearls, etc., are abundant as sea-waves fling them

সাগর সঙ্গম এই গঙ্গা শতমুখী ।

শিবের বাক্যে চৌদ্দ ডিঙ্গা রহিলেক ঠেকি ॥

কলার করিয়া পুনি হরষিত হৈয়া ।

দক্ষিণ পাটন বলি যার ডিঙ্গা বায়্যা ॥

ইত্যাদি ।

—বংশীদাসের *মনসামঙ্গল*, পৃ: ৩১৮-৩৩২ ।

¹ The peculiar customs regarding inheritance such as inheritance of nephews as found in *Bansidās* are still prevalent among the Nairs. The preservation of dead-bodies mentioned in the same work gives us glimpses of customs prevailing among the Buddhists.

in large numbers on the shore in particular phases of the moon. Even the poor own oysters and pearls." ¹

The above lines, though full of grotesque fiction, seem to contain some grains of truth. By the term 'the North' the poet perhaps indicates the foreign countries to the North-east of Bengal.

¹ উত্তর দিকের কথা শুন সদাগর ।
সে দেশের রাজা আছে নামে মুক্তিধর ॥
বুঝিতে না পারি কিছু সে দেশের মর্থ
সে দেশের লোকে খায় মরিচের অন্ন ॥
পূর্ব দেশের রাজা নাম বিজ্ঞানন্দ ।
সে লোক সাধু তার যত বড় অন্ন ॥
পরস্পর যত লোক তমরূপে থাকে ।
ব্রাহ্মণ জাতি বসে যত সকলেই চন্দ্রকাটে ॥
জ্যেষ্ঠ ভাইর বধু করে কনিষ্ঠে বদলা ।
ভগ্নী লইয়া ঘর করে ভাইরে বলে শালা ॥
সকল জাতির নারী বেড়ায় দীর্ঘ ছান্দে ।
বিচিত্র বসন দিয়া ছুইস্তন বান্দে ॥
সব জাতি একাচারি নাহিক আচার ।
ধর্ম্মাধর্ম্ম জ্ঞান নাই কুৎসিত আকার ॥
সে দেশের লোক সব অতি বড় ধনী ।
ডোঙ্গার করিয়া রাখে মাণিক্য দোহারী ॥
অমাবস্তার পর তিথি আসে পূর্ণমাসী ।
চেউতে নিয়া শয্য মুক্তা তোলে রাশি রাশি ॥
হাট কুড়াইয়া খায় হাটুরিয়া কান্দাল ।
পাটিতে করিয়া শুকায় মুক্তা প্রবাল ॥
এতেক শুনিয়া সাধুর আনন্দিত মন ।
নিশ্চয় কহিল যাব দক্ষিণ পাটন ॥
তথা হ'তে চান্নের ডিঙ্গা করিল গমন ।
চন্দ্রকেতু রাজার দেশে করে আগমন ॥
ইত্যাদি ।

—বিজয়শঙ্করের মনসামঙ্গল (নগেন্দ্রমোহন সেন সম্পাদিত), পৃ: ১২৪-১২৫ ।

From Chittagong onwards to China, people are fond of pepper and they take it in excessive quantity with their meal. By the term 'the East' the poet perhaps means the Buddhist Burma and the adjoining countries where owing to the influence of Buddhism caste system is ignored and marriage-laws are less rigorous. The Burmese women are very fond of coloured garments. Freedom of women is also allowed in Burma. The Western country may possibly mean the Madras Presidency which lies to the South-west of Bengal. As regards Pātan, it may be said that it was a rich city or else the merchant vessels would not have been described as visiting the place for the purpose of trade.

Another account of the voyages of the Bengalis (as found in Kavikankan's *Chāndikāvya*, pp. 195-202) runs thus :

"After the performance of the usual ceremonies before sailing, the merchant Dhanapati passed the following places : Bhowsingherghāt, Mātīārisafar, Chāṇḍigāchhā, Bolānpur, Purathān, Nabadwip, Mirzāpur, Āmbuā, Santipur, Guptipārā, Ulā, Khishmā, Mahespur, Fuliā and Hālisahar—all by the side of the Ganges. Then he reached the very celebrated inland port of Bengal known as Saptagrām near the Tribeni. The poet here incidentally praised this port and gave it a superior place among the following ports and places (some of which are Indian and some foreign) known to the poet. They are the ports of Kalinga, Trailanga, Anga, Vanga, Carnāt, Mahendra, Magadha, Mahārāstra, Guzrāt, Barendra, Vindhya, Pingal, Utkal, Drāvir, Rārha, Bijohnagar, Mathurā, Dwārakā, Kāsi, Kankhal, Kekaya, Purabak, Anayuk, Godābari, Gayā, Sylhet, Kāmrup, Koch, Hāngar, Tribhatta, Mānikā, Fatikā, Lankā, Pralamba, Nākutta, Bagar, Malay (Indian), Kurukshetra, Bateswari, Ahulankā, Sibatta, Mahānatta and Hastinā, etc. According to the poet the merchants of the above places visit Saptagrām but the merchants of Saptagrām do never visit those ports and places (these prove the exaggerated notion of the poet about Saptagrām).

At Saptagrām the merchant took on board sufficient quantity of drinking water for his voyage; he then passed some other places of note by the river banks, such as Nīmāitirtha, Betarab, Bāgan, Kāligbāt, Omulinga, Chhatrabhoga, Kālipur, Himāi, Hetāgarb, Sanketamādhava, Madanmalla, Birkhānā, Kālihāti and Dhuligrām. On his way he encountered storm on the river Magrā. It took the

merchant twenty days to reach the canal of Angārpur. Then his vessels entered the sea adjoining the country of the Dravidas. The first place of note was Puri, celebrated for the temple of Jagannāth. Then the merchant visited Chilkāchuli or Chicācole. Next ports of note were Bālighātā and Bānpur which were soon left behind. They then reached the land of the Firinghees (Portuguese). They stealthily passed this place under cover of darkness at night as they were afraid of these people who were very strong for their fleet of warships which were known as Hārmādā (Portuguese Armada, the Portuguese being very strong in ships in these parts). Dhanapati then passed some seas which were infested with crabs, snakes and crocodiles, etc., like Chānd. After much difficulty he reached Lankā. Before reaching Lankā, however, Dhanapati's vessels touched Setubandha-Rāmeswar and crossed Kālidaha or Black-watered Sea."

দেবদ্বিজ গুরুজনে কৈল নমস্কার ।
 হরি হরি বলি নৌকা বাহে কর্ণধার ॥
 লহনা খুলনা স্থানে করিয়া মেলানি ।
 বাহিয়া অজয় নদ পাইল ইন্দ্রানী ॥
 (ইন্দ্রপুরে পূজা দিল লয়ে পুষ্পগানি ।
 (বাহ বাহ বলি ডাকে সাধু গুণমণি) ॥
 তাও সিংহের ঘাটখান ডাহিনে করিয়া ।
 মাটিয়ারি সফর থান বামে এড়াইয়া ॥
 সখন কোরোয়াল পড়ে জলে বাজে সাট ।
 এড়াইল চণ্ডীগাছা বোলনপুরের ঘাট ॥
 ঘরা করি সদাগর দিবানিশি যায় ।
 পুরথনের ঘাটখান বাহিয়া এড়ায় ॥
 কোথার রক্তন কোথা চিড়াখণ্ড কলা ।
 নবদ্বীপে উত্তরিল বেনিয়ার বালা ॥
 চৈতন্য চরণে সাধু করিল প্রণাম ।
 সে ঘাটে রহিয়া করে রক্তন ভোজন ॥
 রক্তনী প্রভাতে সাধু মেলি সাতনাথ ।
 নবদ্বীপ পাড়পুর এড়াইয়া যায় ॥

It is peculiar that Kālidaha which Bansidās mentions to be near Bengal Kavikankan places near Ceylon. It may be that any expanse of blue sea was called by them 'Kālidaha.' As for the mention of Hārmādās, it may safely be said that they are matters of history. The Portuguese pirate-vessels were for some time the curse of the eastern sea.

In the voyage of Srimanta, son of Dhanapati, we come across the names of two islands namely, Chandrasalya and Ābartana, both lying on the way to Ceylon. We cannot locate these islands as we cannot locate Bānpur 'en route' to Chand's voyage, for obvious

স্বয়ং চালায় তরি তীরের পয়ান ।
মুজাপুরের ঘাটে ডিঙ্গা করিল চাপান ॥
নাইয়া পাইক গীত গায় শুনিতে কোতুক ।
ডাহিনে রহিল পুরী আখুয়া মলুক ॥
বাহ বাহ বল্যা ঘন পড়ে গেল সারা ।
বাম ভাগে শান্তিপুর ডাহিনে শুশুপাড়া ॥
উলা বাহিয়া খিসমার আশে পাশে ।
মহেশপুর নিকটে সাধুর ডিঙ্গা ভালে ॥
মহেশপুর সদাগর বাহিল তখন ।
কুলিয়ার ঘাটে ডিঙ্গা দিল দরসন ॥
বামে হালিসহর দক্ষিণে ত্রিবেণী ।
বাজীদের কোলাহলে কিছুই না শুনি ॥

• • • • •
কলিঙ্গ জৈলঙ্গ অঙ্গ বঙ্গ কর্ণাট ।
মহেন্দ্র মগধ মহারাষ্ট্র গুজরাট ॥
* * * *

এ সব সফরে যত সদাগর বৈসে ।
জঙ্গ ডিঙ্গা লয়ে তারা বানিজ্যেতে আইসে ।
সমুদ্রাশ্রমের বেনে সব কোথায় না যায় ।
ঘরে বস্ত্রে স্থখ মোক্ষ নানা ধন পায় ॥

ইত্যাদি ।

—কবিকঙ্কণ শ্রীমদ্রামের চণ্ডীকাব্য, পৃ: ১২৫-২০২

reasons. Though there is evidently much exaggeration about the size of the ships, it is quite probable that the vessels belonging to Bengali merchants were often of enormous size, for the bulk of ships counted very much during those days.¹ The Bengali poets had some traditions of the past, to which they added much that they derived from their imagination. In one of the ballads of Mymensingh, it is mentioned that a vessel was called *koshā*, because its length was two miles (a *krosha*). Of course, it is almost absurd to suppose that any vessel could be of such a monstrous shape, but it is not unlikely that in ancient times when there was a fashion in the civilised countries such as Egypt and Babylon, and as a matter of fact all the world over, in constructing huge and titanic vessels, a full fleet was sometimes made to cover a space of more than a mile, the tradition of which still lingers in the name of pleasure-boats, known as '*Koshā*.'

CHAPTER III

COSTUMES.

The costumes and ornaments of the old Bengali people were different in many respects from those used now-a-days by them. In this respect Bengal had more kinship with the up-country than we see it now. The illustrations given in the following pages are from works mostly written in the Mahomedan period though they will appear to represent things having a bearing on an earlier period.

Angarākhā.—It was a kind of coat once favoured in Bengal and still in use in Rajputana, Gujrat and some other parts of Northern India. It was a military dress in the Hindu period and this may be understood from the fact that the Rajputs still commonly use it while other people such as *Bāniās* do so but rarely. The Rajputs used it with a breast-plate purely for military purposes, which might have served as '*kabach*' or armour, of which we have frequent mention in our old literature. The *Angarākhā* is now generally used as a purely civil dress. In Kotah (Rajputana) and Gujrat it is more commonly termed as *Koriā*. *Koriā* or *Angarākhā* as used by them is a long garment reaching the knee-joint and instead of

¹ For detailed information on Ancient ship-building of Bengal which is still current to some extent in Chittagong, see among others an article on the above subject in the Bengali newspaper "*Jyoti*," dated the 17th *Bhādra* (1327 B.S.). See also Introduction to *Mymensingh Ballads* (Vol. 2, C. U. Publication) by Dr. Sen.

buttons it has fastenings in the neck and breast. With an additional fastening at the waist it constitutes a special type and is known as 'Bālābandi-koriā.' The cuff of the Koriā is generally loose though sometimes close-fitting when buttons are used. In Bengal its use is restricted, being worn by old men in the remote corners of the province.¹

Kāñchuli.²—A corset. It is still used in many parts of India, such as Behar, United Provinces, etc. In Bengal it was considered as a fancy dress by ladies even in the days of the Mahomedan rule. But it is no longer a favourite costume with them. Kāñchuli has two main types, one short—covering only the breast, and the other long—reaching down to the waist. This corset is fastened at the back with ribbons. Reference to this garment has been made by Kānā Hari Datta, Chandidās and a host of other writers, times without number. Old kāñchulis bore beautiful artistic decorations—specimens of needle-work. For a description of these decorations we may refer our readers to the Dharmamangal poems by Ruprām. Here we find Nayāni wearing a Kāñchuli, with exquisite needle-work decorations representing the 'rāsa' of Srikrishna. In Harivamsa by Dwija Bhowāni Das we find the description of a Kāñchuli with the figures of Dasāvatāra on it. In Kavikankan's description of Kāñchuli we find the figure of Bhagawati adorning the dress. The pictorial representations given by our poets are evidently exaggerated, but it cannot be denied that there is some truth in them. Specimens of beautiful representation of pictures are still available at Dacca, Benares and some other parts of Northern India:

Nibibandha.³—A kind of belt used by women. Another kind of belt, not so fine and artistic as the Nibibandha, was made use of

¹ For Angarākhā see the Dharmamangal poems by Rāmanārāyan, C. U. MS. No. 2454, Fol. 12,

অঙ্গ অঙ্গরেখি পরে দেখি লাগে ডর :

(The general put on 'Angarākhā' and looked fierce.) See also Viswakosha, Vol. I, p. 76, where it has been made synonymous with sānjoā signifying armour.

² For a description of Kāñchuli see Sree-Krishna Kirtan (edited by Basanta-ranjan Roy) among other works.

³ See Manasāmangal, by Bansidās, p. 312,

নাভির উপরে পরে নোবিবন্ধ থানি :

(She wore a belt in the waist above the navel.) See also Rāmanārāyana, C. U. MS. No. 2454, F. 13. For পটুকা see *ibid.*, F. 2.

অর্ণের পটুকা বাধে কোমরেতে আট :

by men, and it was called Patukā. The belt had a string of small bells attached to it, from end to end, to keep up a jingling sound pleasing to the ears as the wearer moved about. Description of women using Nibibandha when dancing and of men using Patukā when going to battle, are to be found in our old literature, such as the Dharmamangal and Manasāmangal poems.

The following gives an account of the different kinds of costumes used by people of different professions :

*A Brahmin.*¹—The Dhuti and Chāddar of the priestly Brahmins are, of course, of hoary antiquity. Garments, such as shirt or coat were never used by them. The Brahmin priests would never use garlands or scents, specially when they were 'Brati' or engaged in observing austerities. Chaitanya, when a young man, used scents and garlands as he was not a 'Brati Bipra.'

Yogi.—An ascetic of the Yogi class used to shave his head, wear 'Kundals' or earrings of copper, rub his body with ashes, put on a rag and carry a beggar's knapsack, a dry pumpkin-gourd and a stick. The most significant mark of a Yogi or Yogini was the use of a Kundal. This, however, was often used as a threat by people

(The commander tightened a golden belt around his waist).

কোমরে পটুকা বাধে :

(The commander tightened a belt around his waist). See also Bansidās, p. 312.
See Rāmnārāyan, C. U. MS. No. 2454, F. 13,

ঘন ঘন ঘুঘুরেতে ঘেরিল কোমর :

(Close-fitting bells surrounded the waist of the warrior.)

¹ See the Mahābhārata by Kāsīdās, p. 269,

ব্রতী বিপ্র হৈয়া কেন হেন অনাচার ।
সুগন্ধি চন্দন মালা অঙ্গে সবাকার ॥
জ্ঞানী বিপ্র কহু মালা নাহি পরে গলে ।

(Why have you all overlooked the custom by wearing garlands and using scents and sandal-paste, in spite of the fact that you are all Brahmin Bratis? A wise Brahmin never wears a garland.)

offering, as it did, a broad hint of his desire to turn a Yogi or Yogini.¹

A merchant.—The merchant community as well as the upper classes of the Hindus used rich garments according to their means. Coats were used perhaps on special occasions while a Dhuti, a Chāddar and a Pāgri constituted their usual costume.² Shoes of various descriptions including silver-shoes were used by persons given to luxury.

A warrior.—The dress of warriors in Pre-Mahomedan period consisted of an armour, a helmet, a pair of trousers, a belt with jingling bells attached to it and shoes sometimes of velvet. Ordinary soldiers, however, did not use velvet-shoes. A warrior would use armlet, bracelet and Nupur and rub his body with dust like that of the Mallas or wrestlers before being engaged in a duel. Long

¹ See Govinda Chandra's song, slokas 645-646,

স্বর্ণের ধূরেতে মুড়ায় মাথার কেব ।
কর্ণেতে কুণ্ডল দিয়া হইল জুগী বেঘ ॥
বিভূতি মাখিল গায় কটিতে কৌপিন ।
কাথা ঝুলি কান্ধে করি হইল উদাসান ॥

(The king shaved his head with a golden razor, wore the costume of a Yogi with kundals or earrings and rubbed ashes over his body. He also wore the particular kind of cloth known as Kaupin. With rags and a beggar's knap-sack on his shoulders he became a veritable ascetic). See also Bansidās, p. 247,

লাউয়া লাঠি ঝুলি কাথা মাখে জটাভার ।
ভগবান বস্ত্র পরি যোগীর ব্যবহার ॥
তাম্র কুণ্ডল কমণ্ডলু করে ।

(He took the dry skin of a gourd, a stick, rags and begging bowl with him, put on an ochre-coloured cloth and copper earrings as if a Yogi).

² See Bansidās, p. 195,

পালঙ্কে চড়িয়া বায়, পাটের পাছড়া গায়,
পট্টাধরের বন্দি মাথায় ।

(The merchant Chānd started in a palanquin. He wore silk clothes and had a silken scarf round his head.) Also the same author writes elsewhere,—

রক্ত পাছকায় চাঁদ দিলেন চরণ :

(Chānd put his feet into his silver-shoes.)

sticks like the constable's regulation 'lāthies' were often carried by soldiers and these were known as 'Rāibāus.' In Manik Ganguli's Dharmamangal songs there is an animated description of the march of an army in full military dress.¹

A cow-herd.—He used a short stick (Pāchanbāṛī) and a piece of rope for managing his cows. He used a Pāgri and such ornaments as 'Tāḍ' (Armlet), Bālā (Bangles), Kundals (earrings), etc. He also used a Singā (horn) to call his companions and herds. The cowboys were very fond of garlands of field-flowers and specially those of Gunjā (*Abrus precatorious*). They often painted their faces with Alakā and Tilakā—marks of sandal-paste.²

Female dress.—The women ordinarily used 'Kāñchuli' (corset), 'Oḍna' (a sort of thin wrapper), Sāḍi with an underwear and Nibi-bandha with 'Kinkini' or Ghungura. In the sixteenth century

¹ See the Dharmamangal poems, specially of Manik Ganguli for description of commander's dress,—

শিরে রণটোপ স্বচেল গায়, খাসা মকমলি পাহকা পায় :

(The commander had a helmet on his head, a garment on his body and he wore an excellent pair of silver-shoes.) See also Rāmṇārāyan, C. U. MS. No. 2454, F. 13,—

পটুকা কোমরে বাধে গায় রাঙ্গা মাটি :

(The warrior tied the girdle or belt round the waist and rubbed ochre-coloured dust on his body.) Again the same author writes—C. U. MS. No. 2454, F. 13.

ঘন ঘন ঘুঘুরেতে ঘেরিল কোমর । অঙ্গে অঙ্গরেখি পরে দেখি লাগে ডর ॥

(the warrior put on his waist close-fitting bells known as ghunghur and wore Angarākhā which made him look fierce.) See Mādhavāchāryy's Chandikāvya,

শিরেতে টোপর শোভে কটিতে কিকিনি :

(The military 'Topar' otherwise known as Ranatop or helmet adorned the head and the bells adorned the waist of the warrior.) See Rāmṇārāyan,

তাড় বালা শোভয়ে নুপুর শোভে পায় :

(The Tāḍ or armlet and Bālā or bangles adorned the warrior's arms and the Nupur made the feet look pretty). See the Dharmamangal poems by Rāmchandra Banerjee,

রায়বাইস্তা পাইক হাজার হাজার ধায় :

(Thousands of soldiers armed with Rāibāns were on their march.)

² See Gītaratnāvali, pp. 70-71,

আওত শ্রীদামচন্দ্র রঙ্গিয়া পাণ্ডুর মাথে :

and even earlier the Bengali women probably used Kochā (the tuck of the lower garment which hangs loosely in front of the Sāḍi). The up-country and Marathi women still preserve the display of a 'Kochā' in front of their Sāḍi though it is not prevalent at present among the Bengali women. It may be said that stray references to the use of 'Ghāgrā' is found in our old literature such as the Maynāmati songs and the Vaishnava padas. In 'Kshitish Vamsavaliccharit' too we find mention of the occasional use of Ghāgrā by ladies in the family of Rājā Krishnachandra of Nadia. All these illustrations tend to prove that Ghāgrā was rather used in Bengal as an exceptional dress and came into vogue in this country in the pre-British period owing to the Mahomedan influence and the etiquette then prevalent in the country. It had never commanded universal use, perhaps on account of the climatic condition of this country. Ghāgrā is still used in North-

(The cowboy Sridām comes forward with a red turban on his head.) The same author writes again,

‘গলে লব্ধিত গুঞ্জামালা, ভুজে অঙ্গদবালা ।
গোহাঁদন ডোড়ি কাক্কাহি, কাণে কুণ্ডল মেলা ॥’

(The cow-boy had the garland of *Abrus precatorious* on his neck and armlets and bangles on his arms. He had also kundals or earrings on his ears and he carried a rope on his shoulders to bind the cows.) See Mukundamangal by Haridās,

‘শিঙ্গারবে সঙ্গি সবে সঙ্কেত করিয়া’ :

(He started giving signal to his companions by blowing the horn.) See Gostha by Balarām Das in which a cow-boy's dress has been thus graphically described :—

‘অঙ্গে বিভূষিত কৈলা রতন ভূষণ ।
কটিতে কিঙ্কিনী ধতি পীত বসন ॥
কিবা সাজাইল রূপ ত্রিভুবন জিনি ।
পুষ্পগুচ্ছ শিখিপুচ্ছ চূড়ার টালনি ॥
চরণে নুপুর দিলা তিলক কপালে ।
চন্দনে চর্চিত অঙ্গ রত্নহার গলে ॥’

(A cow-boy's dress adorned the person of Krishna. He wore jewels and yellow-coloured cloths. He had a necklace on his neck, 'Kinkini' on his waist and 'Nupur' on his feet. He wore a peacock's feather on his head, 'Tilak' mark on his forehead and rubbed sandal-paste on his body.)

Western India and this may be due to the close association of the people of that province with the Mahomedans on account of the latter having had their power most strongly established there. The Vaishnava poets of Bengal used the word *Ghāgrā* probably to indicate the ideas they conceived of the Braja-Gopis of Vrindavan. Dr. Coomarswami and Mr. Arun Sen consider the following in their translation of *Vidyāpati* :

“Skirt—*Ghāgrā*—not now a separate garment but that part of the *Saḍi* which forms a skirt. But in *Vidyāpati*’s days the costume of Bengali women seems to have been that of Western Hindustan (skirt, bodice, veil) familiar in Rajput paintings. In this case ‘*Nibibandha*’ is actually the skirt-string (p. 177, notes).”

They further remarked that “*Nibibandha* is not properly a separate garment.” We think that their comments are applicable only to the case of Mithila, the land of *Vidyāpati* and not of Bengal.¹ From a perusal of our old literature it seems doubtful whether *Nibibandha* was not a separate garment.

Men and women of old used incense (*dhup*) to dry and to scent their hair. For scents, the women used *Kumkum*, *Aguru* (*Aqualaria Agolacha Aloe*), sandal-paste and scented oil named ‘*Nārāyan Taila*’ and ‘*Vishnu Taila*.’² Though the use of soap

N. B.—Vaisnavas out of their tender feelings for the cows would not use the word ‘*bāndhā*’ they use the softer word ‘*chhādan*,’ hence the word in the above quotation.

¹ For the use of *saḍi* with an underwear by the Bengali ladies see *Jadunandan Dās*’ ‘*The Toilet of Rādhā*,’

‘সুন্দর রক্তবস্ত্র ধনি ভিতরে পরিল ।
তাহার উপরে নীল বসন ধরিল ॥’

(The beautiful girl wore a thin red cloth as an under-wear over which she put on a blue-coloured *saḍi*.) See also *Chandidās*’ *Khanditā*,

‘নীল পাটের শাটি কোচার কুলনী’ :

(The blue silk *saḍi* had a ‘*kochar*’ with it).

² See *Manasāmangal* by *Jagat Jiban Ghosal*,

‘নারায়ণ তৈল, বিষ্ণু তৈল কেশের গোড়ে দিয়া’ :

(Using *Nārāyan Taila* and *Vishnu Taila* in hair.) See also *Ṣaṇyapurāṇ* by *Rāmāi Pundit* and the *Manasāmangal* poems by *Ketaka Das* for a description of the use of *Nārāyan Taila*. See also the *Manasāmangal* poems by *Dwijā Rasik* for a description of the use of *Kumkum* and sandal-paste,

(Sanskrit कण्ठक) is found in Sanskrit works of Susruta and Bātsyāyana, its use was perhaps either unknown or forgotten in Bengal during the period under review. In place of soap myrabolans were in use.¹ The practice of using musk and sandal-paste was prevalent among both the sexes.² Collyrium was indispensable with women in former days. The sandal-mark (Tilak) on the forehead was essential in the Hindu period as the peculiarity of marking indicated the particular sect of a person. The painting with sandal-paste and musk was sometimes done by way of luxury and this was called 'Patra-rachanā' (*lit.* leaf-painting).³ In it the leaves were not the only things that were represented on the cheek, forehead and the breast. The painting Alakā and Tilakā were very common.⁴ This painting was afterwards practised as a regular art and the ingredient of the paint consisted of sandal-paste, Haritāl (Yellow orpiment), Manhasilā (Realgar) or Gorachanā (a bright yellow pigment).⁵

‘কুমুম চন্দন গন্ধ কাপড়েতে কর’ :

(The cloth diffuses the odour of Kumkum and sandal-paste.)

¹ See Krittivāsi Rāmāyan,

‘সখী দেয় সীতার মস্তকে আমলকী’ :

(The maid uses myrabolans to cleanse Sita's hair.)

² See Krittivāsi Rāmāyan,

‘সর্বদেহে লেপিয়া দিল সুগন্ধি চন্দন’ :

(The whole body was besmeared with the sweet-scented sandal-paste). See also the pada by Vāsudev Ghosh,

‘কস্তুরি চন্দন করি ঘরিষণ, গাথিয়া ফুলের মালা’ :

(Rubbing the musked sandal-paste on the body and preparing a flower-garland.)

³ See Jadunandan Das,

‘কস্তুরির পত্রাবলী লিখিল কপালে’ :

(The forehead was painted with musk). And Ray Basanta,

‘নুগমদ চন্দন তিলক নবকুমুম পত্রাবলী নিরমাণে’ :

(The figures of newly sprouted leaves and flowers and Tilak mark were painted with the help of musk and sandal-paste.)

⁴ See Padāvali by Govinda Das,

‘অলকা তিলকা দেহ’ :

(Paint Alakā and Tilakā marks.)

⁵ See Bātsyāyana's 'Kamasutra,' a Sanskrit work, for a detailed account of the above.

In our old literature such as *Mānikchandra Rājār Gān*, the *Manasā-mangal* poems and others we find mention of cloths of various descriptions¹ such as 'Pāter Pāchhrā' and *Khunā* (ordinary silk cloths), 'Chatak Dhoti,' *Matak Dhoti* (silk cloths of Assam), 'Āgun Pātsāḍi' and 'Megh-Dambur,' 'Meghnāl' and 'Gangājali Sāḍi.' *Gangājali Sāḍi* means that the cloth looked white and transparent like the water of the Ganges on account of its fineness and superior quality. Similarly *Meghnāl Sāḍi* of the *Maynāmati* songs and *Meghadambur Sāḍi* of *Kavikankan* were named after the blue cloud for the resemblance of their colour with that of the cloud. 'Matakdhoti' had perhaps some similarity with the *Matkās* of Assam. In all probability these *Matkās* used to be imported into Bengal from Assam. There were embroidery and picture decorations in garments.²

A close study of the old Bengali literature makes it clear that the mode of wearing cloth and *Pāgri* was just the same in our country as is now prevalent in the up-country districts.

CHAPTER IV

ORNAMENTS

The use of the following ornaments was in vogue in Bengal, many of which have now grown obsolete:—

(i) *Sinthei*.³—This is still used in some parts of Bengal and nearly everywhere in India by women as a head ornament. It

¹ See among others the *Manasāmangal* poems by Jagat Jiban Ghosal (17th century) for *sāḍis* of very fine fabric with such picturesque names as *Yātrāsāḍi* (auspicious starting), 'Mānjā Phul' (a kind of white flower), etc.

² See *Bansidās* (D. Chakravarti's edition),

‘উত্তম উড়নো দিয়া সৰ্ব্বাঙ্গ ঢাকিয়া ।

তাতে যত লিখিয়াছে গুন মন দিয়া ॥’

(Her entire frame was covered in a fine wrapper with beautiful paintings on. Listen to what these paintings were about.)

³ See the *Padāvali* by Govinda Dās—Avisār,

‘চিত্রা সময় জানি, স্বর্ণের সিঁথি আনি, যতনে দেয়ল সিঁথিমূলে’ :

*(The maid *Chitrā* brought a golden *Sinthei* and put it tenderly on *Rādhā*'s head between the hair-parting.)

consists of three gold strings two of which run from ear's end joined at the centre by another which goes straight along the hair-parting. In Rajputana it is called 'Sirbandi.'

(ii) *Beshar*.¹—In rural Bengal it is called 'Nākehhabī'—a nose-ornament. It resembles a small semi-circle and is worn by women.

(iii) *Kundal*.²—A kind of earring formerly used by both sexes. It was generally made of gold inlaid with pearls. In Bengal the original form of this ornament has been modernised and is now known as earring. The old and original form, however, still exists in some parts of Northern India.

A special kind of Kundal was known as the 'Makar-Kundal' as it resembled the head of Makara—a kind of sea-fish. Latterly, however, this pattern was replaced by others—but the name itself was not changed. The present Bengali epithet 'Mākri' given to a particular kind of earring may have derived its name from this 'Makar-Kundal.' A peculiar kind of Kundal which is now used in the up-country districts is commonly known as 'Chowdāni.' It was once used in Bengal, but not in our days.

(iv) *Kānbālā*.³—An ear-ornament otherwise known as 'Chakrāvali,' worn on both ears. Chakra or Chāki was a sort of

¹ See Padāvali by Jnānadas,

‘নাসার বেশর পরশ করিয়া ঈষৎ মধুর হাসে’ :

(She touched the nose-ornament Beshara and smiled a graceful smile.)

² See the *Gitaratnāvali* (B. Saha's collection); p. 70,

‘শ্রবণে কুণ্ডল সাজে’ :

(The Kundals or earrings decorate the ears), also p. 97,

‘অলকা তিলকা ভালে, কানে মকর কুণ্ডলে’ :

(On the forehead there were the marks of Alakā and Tilakā and in the ears the Makar-kundals.) See also Kasi Dās's *Mahābhārata*, Virāt Parva, p. 542, D. C. Sen's edition,

‘মকর কুণ্ডল দিল কবচ উত্তম’ :

(a crown, a pair of Makar-Kundals and an excellent armour were given to him) ; also *ibid*, Adiparva, p. 38,

‘পৌষ নৃপতির স্ত্রীর শ্রবণ কুণ্ডল’ :

(The earrings of the wife of king Ponsya.)

³ See the *Manasāmangal* poems by Jagatjiban Ghoshal,

‘উপর কর্ণে ঢাকি পরে লম্বা কর্ণে বলি । তাহার মধ্যে শোভা করে হীরামঙ্গল কড়ি’ ॥

earring exquisitely decorated with pearls and fixed on to the upper part of the ear. The 'Vali' practically covered the whole ear surface. Between the 'Chakra' and the 'Vali' another ornament known as 'Hīrāmangalkaḍi' or 'Madan-Kaḍi' was also used. Chakrā-vali is still worn by Marwari women of Rajputana.

(v) *Hār*.¹—A necklace. Frequent mention of a peculiar kind of Hār known as Sateswari is to be found in our old literature. Along with Hār another sort of neck-ornament was used, known as 'Gribāpatra'.² It fitted the neck closely above the necklace, like a collar. It is still used in Bengal and is known as 'Chik' and 'Hānsuli.' At present the use of 'Hānsuli' has been rather limited as the lower grades of the Mahomedans only seem to favour it. But this ornament was used by Hindu ladies in ages long gone by as will be evident from stone images of gods and goddesses with Hānsuli on, built in the 11th and 12th centuries and even earlier.

(vi) *Angada*.³—All ornaments for the upper parts of the arms were known as Angada. A few of these are noticed below :

(On the upper part of the ears there were the 'Chakia' and below them lengthwise were the 'Valis' and in the middle the 'Hīrāmangal Kaḍis.') See Chandidās's Sri-Krishnakirtan, p. 112,

‘কাণের হীরামর কড়ি’ :

(The ornament Hīrādhār Kaḍis of the ears.)

¹ See Chandidās's Sri Krishnakirtan, p. 88.

‘ছিড়িয়া পেলাইব বড়াই সাতেশরি হার’ :

(I shall tear off the Sateswari necklace, old lady.) See the Pada by Bhupati Singha,

‘বেসর খচিত সতেশরি পহরিল’ :

(She wore the nose-ornament Beshara and the necklace Sateswari.)

² See Bansidās's Manasāmangal, 'Ushār-Besh,'

‘গলে পরে গ্রীবাপত্র মুকুতার বলী’ :

(She put on her neck the ornament Gribāpatra which was studded with pearls.)

³ See Jadunandan Dās, Sri Rādhikār Beshabinyās,

‘স্বর্ণাঙ্গদভূষে দিল বিশাখা আনিয়া’ :

(The maid Bisākhī brought the gold armlet 'Angada' and put it on Rādhā's arms.)

(a) *Tāḍ*.¹—A pair of plain gold bands about two inches in breadth used on the upper parts of the arms. This ornament was not only used by women but by men as well. *Tāḍ* is otherwise known as *Tāgā*. Its use is now almost obsolete in our country, it having been replaced by 'Ananta' (a nicely decorated armlet).

(b) *Keur*.²—An ornament for the arms used by both the sexes. 'Keur' was a sort of gold band with nice decorations on. It is a very old ornament and a reference to it is to be found in old Sanskrit works written when the Aryans did not yet settle in Bengal and Assam.

(c) *Bāju*.³—An armlet otherwise known as 'Bājubandha.' In the villages of Bengal, especially of Eastern Bengal, it is still continuing its existence though feebly amongst women and children; formerly it was made use of by adult males too. It is generally worn high up on the right arm in Bengal but it is sometimes used on both the arms in Behar and U. P. *Bāju* is a sort of thick band of gold with engravings on and tied to the arm with a string.

(d) *Māduli*.⁴—An armlet. It is almost similar to *Bāju* with this difference that it contains more decorative work and is less thick.

¹ See Bansidās, p. 312.

‘তাড় বাহুটী আর স্বর্ণের চুড়া’

(The ornament known as *Tāḍ* or armlet, *Bāhuti* or bangles and gold *Chud* or a type of bracelet). See also *Gītrātpāvali*, the *Chandikāvya* by *Mādhavācharyya* etc., etc.

² See 'Govinda Chandrer Gīt, Slokas 704-05.

‘খসাইয়া ফেলে হার কেয়ুর কঙ্কণ’ :

(She put off the necklace *Hār*, the armlet *Keur* and the bangles *Kankan*.) See also *Brindāban Dās's Murali Sīkshā*,

‘তুমি লহ কঙ্কণ কেয়ুরী’ :

(You do take the armlets and the bracelets.)

³ See *Chandrāvalīr Punthi* (Battalā ed.),

...‘তাড়, বাজু.....কেয়ুর, কঙ্কণ, পরাইল ছই হাতে দুবন মোহন’ :

(The two arms were decorated with the ornaments *Tāḍ*, *Bāju*,.....*Keur* and *Kankan*.)

⁴ See *Jadunandan Dās's Śrī Rādhikār Vesavinyās*,

‘স্বর্ণ মাদুলি অতি শোভিয়াছে করে’ :

(The gold armlets added to the beauty of the arms.)

Other names of this ornament is *Tābij* (by which name it is known in Eastern Bengal) and *Kabach*. Another variety of this ornament is known as *Jasham* which consists of double rows of *Māduli* and is more commonly used in the rural parts of Bengal.

The order of the different types of *Angada* by which they are to be worn is summarised below: First (nearest armpit) is worn *Māduli*, then comes *Bāju*, then *Tāj* and *Jasham* and finally *Ananta* closes the list.

(vii) *Ratnachud*.—A bracelet. It has three distinct parts each having a different name of its own. The upper part is known as *সরল* (*Sarala*), middle part as *চুড়* (*Chud*) and the forepart as *কঙ্কণ* (*Kankan*).¹ Sometimes this *Kankan*, otherwise known as *Balaya* or *Bālā*, was used as a separate ornament. In *Saral* a ring of pearls or precious stones was set. Adorned with floral decorations the *Chud* was a nicely worked ornament. *Chud* without *Saral* and *Kankan* are still used. A kind of bracelet known as *Bāhuti*² was also used. It is even now favoured by the up-country women. A kind of shell-bracelet (*Lakshmibilās Śankha*³) which was once popular has now become out of fashion. With *Kankan* was connected a pair of precious strings and another ornament for the back of the palm, known as *Hātpadma*. In the middle of the back of the palm was set an exquisitely beautiful ruby in a golden lotus with open petals. This was fixed to the rings worn on all the fingers.

(viii) *Khāḍu*.—Silver anklets. A peculiar kind of this ornament, known as *Magar-Khāḍu*,⁴ was in use among both the sexes. In *Chandidās* another kind of *Khāḍu* has been mentioned. It was called

¹ See *Krittibāsi Rāmāyana*.

‘শাখের উপরে সাজে সোণার কঙ্কণ’ :

(Above the shell-bracelets adorned the gold bracelets or *Kankan*.)

² and ³ See *Bansidās*.

‘কণক বাহুটি করে লক্ষ্মীবিলাস শাখ পরে,’ :

(Gold *Bāhuti* or bracelet was worn on the wrist above the *Lakshmibilās Śankha* or shell-bracelet.)

⁴ See *Bijay Gupta*.

‘ছোট ছোট বাগকের মগর খাড়ু পায়’ :

(Little boys wore anklets known as *Magar-Khāḍu*.)

‘Malla-Toḍar.’¹ The name ‘Toḍar’ gives rise to the supposition that it might have been introduced By Rājā Toḍar Mall who was for some time Akbar’s Governor of the Province (13th century). It might also have derived its name from the Mallas of Birbhum who used the ornament. The wrestlers in those days, used a kind of anklets when they were out for a contest. ‘Mal’—a kind of close-fitting ‘Khāḷu’ or anklets, may have derived its name from these Mallas. We find mention of Bankarāj Pātā or Bāṅkpātā-Mal² in our old literature.

(ix) *Unchhat*,³ otherwise known as Ujjhhatikā. It is now popularly known as ‘Pāshuli.’ It was a kind of toe-cap. In our old literature frequent mention of Ujjhhatikā is found.

CHAPTER V

CULINARY ART

The culinary art once attained a high degree of perfection in this country. It was systematically cultivated by the Hindu women and even the ladies of rank took pride in cooking and thus we find a Sanakā⁴ and a Khullanā⁵ preparing a hundred palatable dishes.

¹ See Chandidās—

‘রাতুল চরণে মলতোড়র’ :

(On the beautiful feet adorned the anklets Malla-Toḍar.)

² See Chandrāvalir Panthi p. 199.

‘বাকপাতা মল পায়’ :

(There were anklets in the feet known as ‘Bāṅkpātā-mal.’) Rādhā in her fine frenzy was described in a Pada by Bansibadan to be wearing Bankarāj Pātā on the breast.

‘হিয়ার উপরে পরে বঙ্করাজপাতা’ :

(Rādhā wore the anklets Bankarāj-pātā on the breast through mistake, owing to her excess of emotion for Sri Krishna.)

³ See Jadunandan Dās’s Srirādhīkar Vesabinyāś,

‘পায়ের উপরে রত্ন উজ্জটিকা দিল’ :

(On the toe was put the toe-caps made of precious gems.)

⁴ See Sanakā’s cooking in the Manasamangal poems of Bansidās (16th century).

⁵ See about Khullanā’s cooking in the Chandikāvya of Kavikāṅkan Mukundaram. (16th century). There are very interesting items of curries in various places of the work.

In ancient time a knowledge of the culinary art in a girl was more appreciated than any other attainments. It was owing to the peculiar condition of domestic life in the Hindu society and the part allocated in it to women that they acquired efficiency in the art and learnt how to cook innumerable articles of food. Due regard was always paid to the ordinary rules of hygiene in preparing these dainties.

In 'Dāker-Vachan,'¹ composed between the 8th and 12th centuries A.D., we find mention of curries, plain and simple, being composed mainly of vegetables, bearing a striking contrast to the subsequent rich dishes of meat and onion of the Mahomedan period. In Mānikchandra Rājār Gān and in other writings of the Pre-Mahomedan period mention of fifty dishes was very common.

Some of the meals of this period, the preparation of which seems to be forgotten in our days, are enumerated below :

(i) *Sitā Misri*.—It was a sort of crystallised sugar made by the following process.²

"The juice of sugarcane is boiled first. At that stage dregs appear on the surface in the form of froths, which when removed the sugar gets condensed. It is known as 'Raja Guḍ.' It is then made into 'Modakguḍ' or ball-shaped raw sugar which again is kept in a jar having an opening at the bottom. Through this hole the liquid portion leaks out. At this stage the upper part of the jug is broken and a kind of vegetable leaf commonly known as 'gānj' is put on the surface. Owing to the chemical action, the raw ingredients of sugar become more refined. But it is yet somewhat coarse and is called 'Bhurā.' At this stage, the sugar is kept in the sun for some time and is then boiled with milk. This process makes

Among other instances may be mentioned Surikshā's cooking in Mānik Ganguli's Dharmamangal poems and Sitā Devi's cooking in Chaitanya Charitāmrita (Madhyakhanda).

¹ See Randhan-Prakaran of Dāker Vachan.

² See Sahaja Upāsana Tatwa, M.S. (C. U.).

দেখ যেন ইক্ষুদ্রস জ্বরের সমান ।
অনলের জোরে দেখ হয় বর্ণ আন ॥
দেখ যেন ইক্ষুদ্র নিশীড়ন করি ।
অগ্নী আবর্তন করে অতি যত্ন করি ॥

the sugar milk-white purging it of the coarse substance. This refined sugar is again boiled and made into small balls which now become very white and are called the 'Olālāndu' or 'Lāddu.' These are boiled once more with milk and formed into lump which finally boiled with milk and now the preparation of 'Sitā-misri or the yellow-coloured crystallised sugar is complete."

(ii) '*Indramithā*' and '*ālfā*' seem to have been once very common. They are not perhaps known now. '*Indra-mithā*' was an article of food (a sort of sweet) of great delicacy. '*Ālfā*' was a kind of sweetmeat mentioned in the *Padāvali* of *Chandidās*.

(iii) *Goat-meat* with the soft roots of banana plant were made into a relishing preparation.²

(iv) '*Gāḍarar Chām*' (Sheep-skin) seems to have been a dainty. In the Manbhum district even the upper classes, we hear, take the skin

অনলের জোগেতে বিরাগ হে উঠয় ।
বিরাগ নির্মল হএ রজগুড় হয় ॥
সেই গুড় মোদকেতে লুন লৈয়া জায় ।
গাজ জোগ দিয়া পুন বিকার ঘুচায় ॥
গাজ জোগ শাদ্ধ হৈলে ভূরা তার নাম ।
বুঢ়াঘীতে পুনরোপী করএ বুখান ॥
অনলে চাপায় পুন দিএ ছুড় জোগ ।
নির্মলতা হয় তার জায় গাদরোগ ॥
বুজুবর্ণ হয় রশ নাম তার চিনী ।
তত্ত্বপর ভিআনেতে ওলালাওখানি ॥
পুন ছুড় জোগ দিএ তাহার ভিযান ।
অথও লডুকা হয় মিত্রী তার নাম ।
তার পর ছুড় জোগে ভিযান করয় ।
সীতা মিত্রী নাম তার নির্দয়তা হয় ॥
অথও মধুর রশ শিতামিত্রী নাম ।
হেমবর্ণ্য বরিষন হয় অবিরাম ॥

¹ Vide Mānikchandra Rājār Gān.

² Bijay Gupta, p. 94.

of sheep, goat, etc., down to the present day as they relish the fat beneath the skin.¹

(v) 'Dugdha-Kusmānda,' or a combination of milk and gourd which is now perhaps an obsolete dish though once very popular.²

(vi) 'Dugdha-Kusumbhā' was another kind of favourite preparation.³ It consisted mainly of milk and *Cannabis sativa* or opium. It still constitutes a dainty in Rajputana where it is taken on occasions of festivity.

CHAPTER VI.

PASTIMES.

The old literature of Bengal abounds with interesting descriptions of pastimes proving the masculine vigour and joy of rural life. Among these pastimes the *Chaugān* play attracts our attention as being specially favourite with the upper sections of our community.

The game of *Chaugān* used to be played with much vigour.⁴ The word *Chaugān* is of Persian origin, from 'Chau'-a crooked stick and 'gān'-a field. The *Chaugān* was played on horseback

¹ Vide Bijay Gupta, p. 94, and Bansidās, p. 289.

² Vide Kavikankan, p. 157.

³ Vide Bhāratchandra's *Annadāmangal*, p. 73; also vide *History of Bengali Language and Literature*, p. 390.

⁴ See Bansidās, p. 276, and Ālāol's *Padmāvat*, pp. 121-122 :

সিঙ্গল দেশের যত রাজার কুমার ।
বাছি বাছি দিল মক্ষ দশ আছোরার ॥
রত্নসেন দিগ হস্তে জুগি দশজন ।
চৌগান খেলিতে হৈল অশ্বে আরোহণ ॥
হুইদগে চারি খুটা আনিয়া গাড়িল ।
মদ্যভাগে আরোপিয়া গাড়িয়া ফেলিল ॥
মিশামিশি হই সবে লাগিল খেলিতে ।
সকলে চাহন্ত নিতে আপনার ভিতে ॥
সিঙ্গলের অর্থবার গুলি নিতে চায় ।
চৌগান বৈলিয়া জুগি এগোলা পল্টায় ॥

with stick and ball. It was played just in the same way as the Polo of the present day. Moreover, the polo originally came from Persia where the *Changūn* used to be played and it may, therefore, be

গেৰুয়া বেড়িয়া শব্দ উঠে ঠনাঠনি ।
 ঘাৰে থাকি দেখে রত্নসেন নৃপমণি ॥
 ইহং হাঁসিয়া নৃপ আসিয়া ত্বরিত ।
 গেৰুয়া মাৰিয়া দিল সিঙ্গলের ভিত ॥
 সিঙ্গল কুমার সবে খেলায় চতুৰ ।
 বেলাবারি হানিয়া গেৰুয়া কৈল ছর ॥
 পুনি বলে খেঁরি খেলি অখণ্ডি সঙ্গে ।
 নীলকরি নিয়া বাও নিজ মনোরঞ্জে ॥
 পাছে পাছে অখ লইয়া ধায় জুগিগণ ।
 ফিরাইতে নায়ে কেহ করিয়া জর্জন ॥
 জুগিগণ বলে গুরু কি কর্ম করিলা ।
 আপনা হস্তের খেঁরি পরহস্তে দিলা ॥
 তুমি হেন মহারাজ সংসার মাজার ।
 আমা হৈতে গুলি নিতে শক্তি আছে কার ॥
 হাত হৈতে গুলি গেলে আর নাহি আশা ।
 গুরু চরণ মাত্র করিও ভরসা ॥
 আমরা না জানি হেনমতে খেলা ভাও ।
 আপনে করিয়া অঙ্গে গুলি পালটাও ॥
 গুরু বলে শুন শিষ্য আমার বচন ।
 দড়ভাবে খেলা খেল হৈয়া একমন ॥
 পরহস্তগত যদি হইল গেৰুয়া ।
 ফিরাইতে পারে সেই সে খেৰুয়া ॥
 শিষ্যগণ সঙ্গে নৃপ এতেক করিতে ।
 সিঙ্গলের পরে গুলি নিল নিজ ভিতে ॥
 তখন সকল লোকে মনে ভাবিলেক ।
 সিঙ্গলের অখবারে খেলা জিতিবেক ॥
 খুটার নিকটে নিজ করিবারে হাল ।
 জুগিগণে গেৰুগুলা কবিল তৎকাল ॥

surmised that it took the name of polo (from Tibetan 'Pulu') afterwards, as it travelled down to India *vid* Tibet. Bengal is directly indebted to Manipur for its introduction into this country.¹

In Ālāol, we get the following description of the same, which gives a clear idea of the manner in which it was played.

Two parties, each consisting of ten riders, stood facing each other. It was the aim of each party to drive the ball through the goal-posts of the other. At first one party stood on the defensive. When the latter approached the goal of the former (ছই খুটি মধ্য দিয়া গুলি নিতে চায়) with hard riding, the defending party lost courage. But their goal was saved by the tact and agility of the goal-keeper (King Ratna Sen) who sent the ball to the opposite party with a hard stroke from his stick. The opponents received the ball in right earnest and again furiously charged the other party when it seemed that none could save the situation. Suddenly the goal-keeper checked the progress of the ball and with a wonderful dash charged his opponents

ছই খুটি মধ্য দিয়া গুলি নিতে চায় ।
চৌগান ঠেলিয়া জুগি গুলি পাল্টায় ॥
খুটি বেড়ি ছইদলে করে হানাহানি ।
রত্নসেন নৃপ তবে মনে মনে গুণি ॥
বিজলি চটকে প্রবেশিয়া মহামতি ।
চলিল গেরুয়া লই অলঙ্কিত গতি ॥
বেলাবারি হানি গুলি দূরে চালাইল ।
পাছে পাছে শিখাগতি অখ দাবাইল ॥
আর পাছে অখবার দাইল তুরিতে ।
নৃপতির শিক্ষা কেহ না পারে লক্ষিতে ॥
ছাটের উপরে ছাট অখরে চাপিয়া ।
চলিল নৃপতি তবে গেরুয়া লইয়া ॥
ডাইনে রাখিয়া গুলি বলে খেলাখেলি ।
শীঘ্র দূর কর রত্নসেন মহাবলি ॥
লক্ষিতে নারিল সিঙ্গলের অখবার ।
এইমতে জুগিয়া জিনিল তিনবার ॥

and in their confusion sent the ball right through their goal-posts, thus defeating the assailants with much smartness and vigour."

The main point to be considered in the game is the throwing of the ball through the opponent's goal-posts.

In polo the same thing is also done. The way in which one party defeated the other as mentioned in the *Padmāvat* (চলিল নৃপতি তবে গেরুয়া লইয়া) shows that in *Chaugān* there was no offside as in the Polo. As from *Chaugān* perhaps comes the Polo, so from the Polo perhaps comes the Hockey, Golf and Cricket.¹ The *Chaugān* might also be the origin of our indigenous 'Dhophāri,' a sort of rural hockey played with a crooked bamboo-stick and ball in the district of Mymensingh.

(ii) Next to *Chaugān*, the *Geru* play may be mentioned. *Geru* means a ball (Prākṛit, গেরুয়া). It used to be played by a number of boys in which the throwing of the ball by a party against the opponent and the catching of it by the latter constituted the main point of interest.² The play is still current in Bankura and some other parts of West Bengal.

(iii) There was once a game current in Bengal by the name *Duāpati*. The play might be the same as or similar to the 'Dābākhelā' of the present day.³

(iv) The *Dharmamangal* poems give us a clue of the method of wrestling and its popularity in bygone days.⁴

¹ Vide *Encyclo. Brit.*, Vol. 22, pp. 11-12.

² See the *Padāvali* by Chandidās, 'ফুলের গেরুয়া লুফিয়া ধরয়ে সবনে দেখায় পাণ । C. U. MS. No. 292, Fol. 2.

³ See *Mainamati songs* (11th-12th Century).

⁴ Vide *The Dharmamangal poems of Ghanarām*, pp. 79-82 :

বচনে বচনে বড় বাড়িল বিবাদ ।
ভূতলে আছাড়ি ভূজ ছাড়ে সিংহনাদ ॥
আড়ম্বর করি দৌহে মাথে বীরমাটি ।
অমনি উঠিয়া লক্ষ উলটি পালটি ॥
মালসাট মারি দৌহে হাতাহাতি যুঝে ।
ঘোর শব্দ উঠিছে আছাড়ে ভূজে ॥
মত্ত গজে গজে যেন বাজে মহাযুদ্ধ ।
রণ-ধূলে অবনু আকাশ হ'ল রুদ্ধ

In wrestling it had always been the custom to rub the body of the wrestler with the dust of the play-ground, this dust being known as 'Birmāti.' The 'Mallas' or wrestlers would after tightening the cloth round their loins and a rope known as the 'wrestlers' rope (Malldore) round their heads rub their bodies with this grey dust before the game starts. There were professional wrestlers generally recruited from the lower class people as the line কৃষ্ণ কলেবর কাষ্ঠি মুর্ধ্বেমান কাল would signify. Here is an account of a wrestling contest described by this poet.

"At first the combatants sat crouching, exhibiting the strength of their arms, in the course of rubbing their bodies with earth, and all the time kept shouting out challenge to each other (বচনে বচনে বড় বাড়িল বিবাদ। ভুতলে আছাড়ি ভুজ ছাড়ে সিংহনাদ). Then suddenly both of them jumped up and caught hold of each other's arms. Each tried hard to subdue his adversary and in the attempt of doing so every part of the body of each came in close contact with that of the other. Interlocking of arms, knocking of heads, all formed parts of the contest (বাহ কসাকসি কৃষি ঠেলা ঠেলি যায়। চঞ্চল চরণ গতি ছান্দে পায় পায়). After hard struggle, one of the wrestlers (Lausen) got the better of the other whom he knocked down upon the earth and sitting upon his breast continued dealing heavy blows on him till he spat blood."¹

সেইরূপ সমরে সমান বোঝাকৃষি ।
মহাযুদ্ধে মাথায় মাথায় চুসাহুসি ॥
বাহ কসাকসি কৃষি ঠেলাঠেলি যায় ।
চঞ্চল চরণ গতি ছান্দে পায় পায় ॥
অমনি আছাড়ি ফেলে সিংহনাদ ছাড়ি ।
পাছাড়ি পাছাড়ি ভূমে যায় গড়াগড়ি ॥
সেন মহাপ্রতাপ মালের বসে বুকে ।
মুটকি মারিতে তার রক্ত উঠে মুখে ॥

¹ See the Dharmamangal poems by Sitārām Dās, C. U. No. 2471, F. 10, for an elaborate description of wrestling. See also the Dharmamangal poems by Manik Ganguli (ed. by H. P. Shastri and D. C. Sen), pp. 44-45.

CHAPTER VII.

WARFARE.

The picture of a Bengali soldier as depicted in our old literature, such as the *Sivāyanas*, the *Chandikāvyas*, the *Dharmamangals* and the *Manasāmangals*, is a curious medley, combining the elements of the Hindu as well as of the Mahomedan periods. This was due to the circumstances that the majority of the writers who have left us accounts of warfare of the Hindu period lived at a time when the country was under Mahomedan rule. Undoubtedly the older traditions continually changed as is apparent from the works of writers of successive ages, and the oldest specimens of the abovenamed works are now almost rare in the process of continuous modernisations of the songs, as they were sung from generation to generation. As regards weapons used by warriors we have quite a long list of them in these works including among more formidable ones the various kinds of fire-arms, 'Raibāns,' battle-axe, etc.; along with these there is, of course, a mention of other ordinary and perhaps primitive weapons of warfare.

Some of the old weapons are described below :—

(1) *Parasu*.—A kind of battle-axe and was perhaps in use in ancient warfare from time immemorial. Another slightly different type of this weapon was also used and was known as 'Paraswadha.' The *Parasu* consisted of a 'thin stick with a broad mouth.' The shape of the axe attached to the handle resembled a crescent. *Daboosh*, a peculiar type of *Parasu* was mentioned as being largely in use in ancient battles.¹ The battle-axe used locally was known as the 'Tāngi.' The Aryan *Parasu*, in spite of some similarity, must have been originally different from the non-Aryan *Tāngi*,—the very non-Sanskritic name of the axe *Tāngi* carries its history with it. More than one *Tāngi* was used by a warrior who used to

¹ See *Sivāyana* by Rāmeswar, p. 65.

‘ডাবুশ, পট্টিশ, পরশ, পরশধ ধরতর বরিবৈ কুঙ্গি’ :

(The weapons *Dāboosh*, *Pattish*, *Parasu* and *Paraswadha* were all hurled against the enemy.)

fasten them to his belt, in his left.¹ In Europe, the battle-axe was a very popular weapon in the middle ages.²

(2) *Yamadhār* (*Sanskrit* 'Yamadrangstra'?).—A kind of double-edged (from 'Yama' both) heavy sword, very popular in ancient time. It used to be kept hanging by a warrior in his belt on his right.³ A type of Yamadhār was known as the Pattish which had a very sharp point.⁴ Pattish has been described in Gustav Oppert's celebrated work known as 'The Weapons, Army Organisation and Political Maxims of the Hindus,' p. 21, as a battle-axe.

¹ See the Dharmamangal poems by Ghanarām, p. 202 :

‘বাম দিকে বৃগল টাঙ্গি যম অবতার’ :

(On the left there were a couple of fierce-looking battle-axes.) See also the Dharmamangal poems by Rāmnārāyan, C. U. MS. No. 2454, F. 13,

প্রবল পুরুষ বান্ধে টাঙ্গি বান তিন :

(The Commander tied three huge battle-axes to his waist.)

² See Encyclopaedia Britannica, Eleventh Edition, Vol. 2, p. 585 (Arms and armour). In ancient Rome also the Roman Licitors always carried axes with them.

³ Sometimes more than one Yamadhār were used by a single person in a battle. See the Dharmamangal poems by Ghanarām, p. 202,

‘ডানভাগে বান্ধিল বৃগল যমধার’ :

(The warrior tied a pair of Yamadhārs to the belt on the right side.) See the Dharmamangal poems by Rāmnārāyan, C. U. MS. No. 2454, F. 2 and 12. The ancient Roman soldiers used this double-edged sword 'We gather from the monuments that in the 1st century B.C. the Roman sword was short, worn on the right side (except the Officers who carried no shield), suspended from a shoulder-belt (balten) or a waste-belt (Cingulum) and reaching from the hollow of the back to the middle of the thigh, thus representing a length of from 22 inches to 2 feet. The blade was straight, double-edged, obtusely pointed on the Trajan's column (A.D. 114); it is considerably longer and under the Flavian Emperors, the long single-edged Spatha appears frequently along with the short sword' *Vide* Encyclo. Brit., Vol. 11, 11th Ed., p. 585. The sword found at Micenae are two-edged, of rigid bronze and as long as three feet or even more; from representations of battle it would seem that they were perhaps used for thrusting mainly. *Ibid*, p. 583. In the Phalanx of the Macedonians the sword that was used was straight, sharp-pointed, short, sometimes less than 20 inches and rarely more than 2 feet long. It was double-edged and used for both cut and thrust. *Ibid*, p. 584.

⁴ For a description of Pattish, see Sivāyana by Rāmeswara, p. 65,

‘পরন্তু পট্টিশ কার পেটে দিল পিঠে’ :

(The Parasu and Pattish were thrust into the abdomen of the enemy by his opponent during the battle.)

(3) *Nenja*.¹—A short spear or javelin. It was wielded by the right hand. (Cf. the Roman Pilum or javelin. It was carried on an iron rod of about 20 inches in length.)

(4) *Sulfi* or *Sool*.—A spear. A spear with three points was known as Trisul or trident.²

(5) *Raibāns*.—A kind of regulation Lathis and was once a favourite accompaniment of the infantry known as the Paiks.³

(6) *Karmook*.—A bow—one of the most important weapons of ancient warfare. The quiver was commonly called Tarkach (cf. Sanskrit Tunir.⁴) There was a peculiar sort of arrow called

¹ See the Dharmamangal poems by Rāmnāryan, C. U. MS. No. 2454, F. 13,

‘ভানি হাতে নিল নেজা বাঁম হাতে বাঁশ’ :

(The warrior took in his right hand a Nenja and in his left hand a Rāibāns.)

• Cf. the Assagai or Assegai of the South African tribes. It is ‘a slender spear of hard wood, tipped with iron, some for hurling, some for thrusting with—used by the South African tribes, notably the warlike Zulus.—Chambers, T. C. Dictionary’ p. 55 See also the Chandikāvya by Kavikankan Mukundarām, p. 46,

‘ফোঁটা দিয়া বিস্ফে রেজা, ছাড়িতে শিখারে নেজা, চামের টোপর শোভে শিরে’ :

(The warrior wore a leathern headdress and marked a spot at a distance for practising the art of hurling a javelin.)

² See the Chāndikāvya by Mādhavāchāryya,

‘অস্ত্র সুল্ফি হাতে’ :

(The warrior had a spear in his hand together with other weapons.) The spear was much in use among the Mycenaeans. In the Mycenaean age ‘the Mycenaean soldiers carried apparently a bronze spear.....It would appear only the chief warriors used spear and shield.’ See Encyclo. Brit., 11th Ed., Vol. 2, p. 583.

In ancient mythology of Greece and Rome ‘a kind of scepter or spear with three prongs, the common attribute of Neptune, the deity of the Ocean’ (Roman Antiq.). “A three-pronged spear used in the contest of gladiators by the Rotarius.”—W. Smith (From Webster’s Dictionary).

³ See the Chāndikāvya by Kavikankan Mukundarām, p. 94,

‘বাজন নূপুর পায় বীরঘটা পাইক ধায় রায়বাঁশ ধরে খরশাগ’ :

(The infantry wearing jingling Nupuras on their feet and wielding strong Rāibāns with their hands rushed on bravely to the battle.) In Roman antiquity a Licitor was an officer who bore an axe and fasces or rods, as ensigns of office.”—Webster.

⁴ See the Dharmamangal poems by Rāmnāryan, C. U. MS. No. 2454, F. 13,

‘তীরসহ তরকচ তুরিতে বাক্কে ভাল’ :

(The warrior hastily equipped himself with the quiver, full of arrows.)

Chiār.¹ Though literally the word means an arrow with four points it really was applied to any arrow with more than two points. An arrow with two points was known as the Doār.² Chiāri is a diminutive form of Chiār, signifying a small arrow. In a battle the bow used to be carried by a soldier in his left hand.³ Like the battle-axe, the bows and arrows were once very popular in Europe also. The cross-bowmen of England were once very famous in Europe.⁴

(7) *Bhusandi or Musandi*.—An octagon-headed club. It had 'broad knots, a broad body; and a good handle for the fist.' It was three cubits in length and of the colour of a cobra. It was noted for two chief movements, namely, 'Jerking and the whirling.'⁵

¹ See Ghanarām, p. 202,

‘চক্চক্ চিয়াড়ে পাটন পাঁচ শির’ :

(The dazzling arrow had five points.)

² See Kavikankan, p. 96,

‘দোয়াড় চিয়াড় বাণ করবাল খরশাণ’ :

(There were arrows with two points and with many more and sharp swords.)

See also Kavikankan, p. 52,

‘মহাবীর চিয়াড় চাপড়ে করে রণ’ :

(The hero fought with a bow and arrows.) Chāpar meant a bow. See also Krittibasa's Rāmāyana, Uttarākānda, p. 151, Sāhitya Parisat Ed.)

‘দুর্জয় ধনুক হাতে কাণ্ড যে চিয়াড়ি’ :

(The hero had an invincible bow in his hand and arrows all with more than two points in his quiver.) Kānda or Kār in the sense of arrow is still current in the colloquy of the districts of Bankura, Manbhum and Burdwan. See also Kavikankan, p. 96,

‘জোড়ে চৌখণ্ডি কাড়’ :

(Fitted an arrow with four heads.)

³ See the Dharmamangal poems by Rāmnārayan, C. U. MS. No. 2454, F. 12,

‘বাম হাতে বিরাজিত বিচিত্র কার্দুক’ :

(In the left hand of the hero there was the nice-looking bow.)

⁴ See Encyclo. Brit., 11th Edn., Vol. II, Arms and Armour.

⁵ And ² See "The Weapons, Army Organizations and Political Maxims of the Ancient Hindus" by Gustav Oppert. See also Nitiprakāsikā (a Sanskrit work by Vaisampāyan, IV, slokas 51. See also Kavikankan's Chandikāvya, p. 76,

‘ভুবত্তী, ভাবশ খরশান’ :

There was also another kind of this club which was of a crooked shape. We find in Gustav Oppert's work (p. 13) the following translation from the Nitiprakasika by Vaisampāyan: 'The Bhindivāla or Bhindipāla (crooked club) has a crooked body; its head which is bent and broad is a cubit long and it is a hand in circumference. It is first whirled thrice and then thrown against the foot of the enemy. When throwing the Bhindivāla, the left foot should be placed in front.'¹

(8) *Khetaka* otherwise known as Charma or Dhāl—A shield.² It was chiefly made of the hide of rhinoceros and buffaloes (*cf.* the Athenian Pelta). These shields were of various sizes and shapes with figures wrought on them.³

9. *Pās*.—A noose. The ancient Pās or noose afterwards developed into Gāmehhā with which the Thugees, ordinarily called the band

(The weapons called Bhusandi and the sharp Dāboosh.) *Cf.* 'The mace of Areithous, mentioned as a unique example by Nestor' (Iliad, VII, 141). In England after the Norman conquest a knight sometimes carried a mace with him together with an axe. See Encyclo. Brit., 11th Edn., Vol. II, pp. 584-85.

¹ See Gustav Oppert's "Weapons, Army Organization and Political Maxims of the Ancient Hindus." See also Ramdas Sen's work on the subject named 'Bhārat Rahasya.' See also Kavikankan's Chandikāvya, p. 94 (Bangabāsi ed.).

² See Kavikankan's Chandikāvya, p. 267 (Bangabāsi ed.).

‘খেটকধরা বর্ষরনাদিনী’ :

(The Goddess Durgā of deep voice was the wielder of Khetk or shield.)

³ See Rāmnārāyan's Dharmamangal, C. U. MS. 2454, F. 12.

‘গুণ্ডারের ঢাল পিঠে’ :

(On the warrior's back there was the shield made of rhinoceros's skin). And also Kavikankan's Chandikāvya, p. 75.

‘কিনিল মহিষা ঢাল’ :

(The soldier bought a shield made of the skin of a buffalo.)

See Indian Iconography by Gopinath Rao. See also the History of the Art of war by C. Oman and Encyclo. Brit., 11th Edn., Vol. II, Arms and Armour, for details of European shields, from which the following is quoted:—'The round Argolic shields of Greece and the oblong Roman shields introduced with the Punic wars were once very famous. For general reference on these weapons, see also among others, the article named 'প্রাচীন হিন্দু জাতির যুদ্ধ বিজ্ঞা' : by Chānidās Majumdar Vidyāratna, published in Vikāsh of Falgoon, 1330 B. and quoted in the Pravasi of Āshār, 1330 B.S.

of Gāmechhāmorās, used to strangle their victims. The Pās once formed one of the weapons of the God Varuna and the Goddess Durgā and often figured in the description of the Bengali poets of old.¹

(10) *Chakra*.²—A discus of which the following description is found in Sukraniti and the Nitiprakasika, IV, pp. 47-48. 'The Chakra (discus) has the form of a circular discus with a quadrangular hole in its midst. Its colour is like that of indigo water and its circumference amounts to two spans or ten cubits according to Sukraniti. Five or seven motions are connected with the discus practice. It is most probably identical with the quoit still in use in some Sikh regiments and also among the troops of native Indian Princes.' (See Gustav Oppert's work on the subject.)

(11) *Sakti or Sel*.—A kind of spear or rod.³ It was considered one of the most important weapons of war in the past. Its size was about two cubits in length; one end of it was made of metal, representing the head of a lion with open mouth exhibiting the tongue, the chin resting on sharp claws. It had a long handle with small belts attached all over excepting the part reserved for holding. Its colour was black and it attained great velocity when thrown against the enemy. The course it took when thrown was curvilinear and not straight. Cf. the Australian Boomerang.

¹ See Kavikankan's Chandikāvya, p. 71.

‘পাশাঙ্কুশ ঘণ্টা খেটক শরাসন ।

অসি চক্র শূল শক্তি কতমত শর ।

শোভে বাম করে পাঁচ দক্ষপ্রহরণ ॥

পাঁচ অঙ্গে শোভিত দক্ষিণ পাঁচ কর ॥

The goddess Durgā had the following weapons in her ten arms: she held in her five arms on the left the Pās (noose), the Ankush (elephant-goad), the Ghantā (bell), the Khetak (shield) and the Sarāsan (the bow) and on the right she held the Ashi (sword), the Chakra (disk), the Sool (spear), the Sakti (a kind of iron bar or spear) and Sar (arrows). See also Harirām's Chandikāvya wherein weapons in the arms of the goddess are somewhat differently mentioned.

² See foot-note on Pās in the above.

³ See Ghanarām's Dharmamangal, p. 156.

‘সর শেল গুলি, আঁখালি পাঁখালি সামালে সমরে কালু’ :

(A Kālū checked the arrows, Sel and the shots which were showered upon him.) In "The Elements of Hindu Iconography" by Gopinath Rao, Vol. I, Part I, we find Sakti in the form of a spear. It consists of a metallic piece either quadrangular or elliptical in shape with a socket into which a long wooden handle is fixed. See Ratnamālā, and Gustav Oppert, p. 13, Nitiprakāsikā, IV, 32-35 and the Visvakosha.

(12) *Tomar*.—The Tomāhawk, of which the following description is found in Gustav's work: "The Tomar (Tomāhawk) had a wooden body, a metal head, formed like a bunch of flowers. It is three cubits long, has a red colour and is not crooked. It is moved in three ways." A type of Tomāhawk was known as Sābal and another type as Jāthā.¹ These weapons were hurled against the enemy from a distance.

(13) *Mudgar*.—The hammer. The description of this weapon given by Gustav Oppert in his work (p. 20) is as follows: "The Mudgar hammer is small at the foot-end, has no face, and is three cubits long. Its colour resembles honey, its shoulder is broad and it weighs 8 loads. It has a good handle, is round, black coloured, and is a hand in circumference. It is whirled around and fell things to the ground." Not only the soldiers but the war-elephants too wielded the weapon with its trunk, creating great havoc in the ranks of the enemy.² It was a common practice for the Indian war-elephant to use Mudgar during a battle. Cf. the hammer of the Scandinavian god Thor.

(14) *Tabak*.—A musket of old type—a blunderbuss. A musketeer was generally known as the Tabaki. A special type of Tabak was known as the Belak (Carbine).³ The blunderbusses and the carbines were much in use in Europe in the 18th century.

¹ See Kavikankan's Chandikāvya, p. 94.

‘মাহুত হাথির পিঠে, শেল সাবল জাঠে, গগন পুরয়ে আড়ধরে’ :

(The Māhut took upon the back of his elephant Sel, Sābal and Jāthā.) See Also Rameswar's Sivāyana, p. 65.

‘লোহার মুদগর, কুঠার, তোমর, শেল, শূল খরধার ছুরি’ :

(Among the weapons there were the iron clubs, the battle-axes, the Tomāhawks, the Sels, the Sools, and the sharp daggers.)

² See Kavikankan's Chandikāvya, p. 94.

‘শত শত মস্তহাতী লৈয়া আইসে সেনাপতি শুণে বাকী লোহার মুদগর’ :

(Hundreds of war-elephants who had iron hammers in their trunk were brought in the battle-field by the Commander of the army.)

³ See Kavikankan's Chandikāvya, p. 94.

‘তবক বেলক বাণ’ :

(15) *Ankush*.¹—The elephant-goat. It was a weapon consisting of a sharp metal hook attached to a wooden handle.”

War-chariots and war-elephants were amongst the more important paraphernalia of warfare.²

Horses employed in warfare were not only of indigenous breed (specially of Sind) but those imported from Persia, Arabia, Camod (Cambodia or Tibet ?) and Turkistan, etc.³

The elephants, horses, chariots and infantry were the four principal arms employed in warfare and were known as the Chaturanga (*lit.* four arms).⁴ The artillery came to be introduced in later years. From a description of warfare in our old literature it may be surmised that the cavalry used to march first followed by war-chiefs marching ordinarily on trained elephants.⁵ The description of the ‘*Rāibānsiā pāiks*’ or the infantry armed with *lathis* fighting side by side with the artillery seems queer indeed. The *pāiks* used to cover their persons with earth to check perspiration before going to a battle.

(The musket called Tabak and Belak and also the arrows.) See also p. 95 of the same work,

‘রাইবান তবকী ফরিকাল বাহুকী’ :

(The soldiers wielding Raibāns, Tabaks and the bows.) See also p. 76,

‘মুটকির তেজ বেন তবকের গুলি’ :

(The blow was as effective as a gun-shot.) Farikāl meant a detachment of troops. See also p. 96,

‘তবক বেলক কাছে কামান কপাল’ :

(There were the soldiers wielding the Tabaks, the Belaks, the cannons and the swords.

¹ See ‘The Elements of Hindu Iconography’ by Gopinath Rao, Vol. I, Part I.

² See Kavikankan’s Chandikāvya, p. 94.

‘রথেতে জুড়িয়া হয় মহারথী বায় সারি সারি’ :

(The war-chariots drawn by horses and ridden by great warriors were marching in line).

³ See Chandikāvya by Mādhavāchāryya (edited by Chandrakanta Chakravarti), pp. 269-270,

‘এরাকি টান্নন তাজী, গরুদ কামোদাবাজী, সিদ্ধদেশী তুরগ বিশাল’ :

(The big horses from Persia, Turkistan, Sind, Camod, etc.)

⁴ See the Dharmamangal poems by Ramchandra Banerjee,

‘রাজার আদেশে চলে চতুরঙ্গ দল’ :

(By order of the king all the four arms were in readiness for a battle.)

⁵ See the description of march of an army in the Dharmamangal songs by Sitārām Dās, C.U. MS. No. 2471, F. 6, 8.

and they wore *nupura* on their feet.¹ Among the infantry we find mention of archers, wrestlers, shield-bearers and clubmen.²

The carrying of flags in a battle is mentioned in the *Chandikāvya* by Mukundaram.³

Foreigners were employed in large numbers in the Bengal army. Among them the Telugus were numerous and their services were highly valued.⁴

The Rajputs also formed an important element in the Bengali army.⁵

There was a time when people belonging to different castes used to be employed in warfare, Brahmins not excepted. We find Bramhin troops exhibiting their sacred threads in mortal fear and reciting the *sandhyā mantras* as a sign of umiliation to save themselves from assault.⁶

The Domas though now occupying a degraded position in society were once held in high esteem. They were brave soldiers and one Kaloo Dom, as is found in the Dharma songs was even raised to the status of a general as a reward for his bravery. In those

¹ See the *Chandikāvya* by Mādhavāchāryya, also *Chandikāvya* by Kavikankan, p. 94.

² See the *Dharmamangal* poems by Ramchandra Banerjee and the *Chandikāvya* by various authors.

³ See Kavikankan's *Chandikāvya*, p. 94.

‘সোণার টোপর শিরে, ঘন সিংহনাদপুরে, বাশে দোলে চামর নিশান’ :

(The king had a crown on his head and he marched amidst repeated loud cheers of the army while the flags and chowries hoisted on bamboos waved by the wind.)

⁴ See the *Manasāmangal* poems by Saahthibar,

‘তেলেদ্বার ঠাট লড়ে বত্রিশ হাজার’ :

(Thirty-two thousand Telugu soldiers began the march.)

⁵ See Ramchandra Banerjee's *Dharmamangal* poems,

‘রাজপুত চৌহান সিপাই সাজা ঢালা’

(There were the Chauhan Rajput soldiers, armed cap-a-pie with armours.) The word Telugu is perhaps connected with the word Telinganā which was once a flourishing Hindu State in the Deccan with its capital at Warangal, now situated in the Nizam's territories.

⁶ See the *Chandikāvya* by Mādhavāchāryya, in which we find that among the Bengali troops, cowed down by formidable opponents, were men of various castes, such as the Brahmins, the Yogis, the blacksmiths and others.

days the women also were good fighters as we learn from the glorious description of Lakhā, a wife of Kaloo Dom and Kaneja and Kalingā, wives of Lausen.

Twelve sub-lords¹ or vassals used to accompany a king to a battle-field. (*Cf.* Dodanapolis of ancient Greece. This custom also reminds one of the feudal system of Europe in the Middle ages and the 'Sāmanta' system of Rajputana which is still in vogue.)

The warriors were generally armed to the teeth and protected with armour. (*Cf.* the knight's accoutrement of Europe in the Middle ages and the armours of the Homeric warriors and the warriors of ancient Greece and Rome.)

‘পলাইল যোগী পাইক মনে ভয় পায়্যা ।
সমরে রহিল কাটামুণ্ড শিরে দিয়া ॥
কশ্মকার পাইক বলে করিয়া বিনয় ।
বীর গুরু বধিতে তোমার ধর্ম নয় ॥
নট পাইক বলে বাপু আমি পাইক নহি ।
বেগার ধরি আনিছে পরের ভার বহি ॥
পলায় বিশ্বাস পাইক ভয় ত্রাস পায়্যা ।
আকুল হইয়া কান্দে মুখে হাত দিয়া ॥
যতেক ত্রাঙ্গণ পাইক পৈতা ধরি করে ।
দস্তে তৃণ ধরি তারা সন্ধ্যা মস্ত পড়ে ॥
যত যত যোগী পাইক দণ্ড ধরি করে ।
রক্ষ রক্ষ বলি তারা বিনয়ত করে ॥’

—মাধবাচার্য্যের চণ্ডীকাব্য (পৃঃ ৮২) ।

¹ See the Dharma songs by Ramchandra Banerjee.

‘বার ভূঞা চলে ঘোড়া করিয়া তাজনী,
আচ্ছাদিত ধূলায় গগনে দিনমণি ;

(Twelve vassals followed their lord on horseback and the dust raised by the hoofs of the horses concealed the sun from view.)

CHAPTER VIII.

WAR-MUSIC.

Instrumental music always accompanied an army in former days as it does now all over the world. The two lists of musical instruments, given in the Dharmamangal songs by Ramchandra Banerjee and the Chandikāvya by Kavikankan Mukundarām are more complete than other works on the subject.¹ A few musical instruments which seem to be used in former days but are now made use of mostly on festive occasions are noticed here.

* See the Dharmamangal poems by Ramchandra Banerji, Typ. Sel. Vol. I, p. 412 :

‘রায়বীণা গন্ধবীণা জম্বুরা ক্রলান ।
 কমরি মোহরি কাড়া কুকারে কাহান ॥
 দগড় দগড়ী বেণু রুদ্রবীণা বাশী ।
 কাংশ করতাল ঘণ্টা ঘোর শব্দ কাসী ॥
 সিদ্ধ আনবরোল ভেরী রণভেরী কালী ।
 জয় ঢাক বীর ঢাক কর্ণে লাগে তালি ॥
 ধুসরি মোহরি ঢোল খঞ্জরি খমক ।
 গঙ্গল বাজবাজে সঘনে গমক ॥
 রণশিঙ্গা ভোরঙ্গ বাজয়ে ভেঙ ভেঙ ।
 শোকসিঙ্ঘর উপরে দামামা ধাঙ ধাঙ ॥’

(The military music consisted of the following instruments : Rāivinā, Gandhavinā, Jamburā, Cralān, Khamari, Mohari, Kārā, Kāhān, Dagar, Dagari, Benu, Rudra-vinā, Bānsi, Karatāl, Ghantā, Kānsi, Sindhu, Ānabarol, Banabheiri, Kālī, Jaydhāk, Birdhāk, Dhusari (Mohari ?), Dhol, Khanjari, Khamak, Jagajhampa, Ranasingā, Bhorang and Dāmāmā.

See Kavikankan's Chandikāvya, p. 264 :

‘রায়বীণা গন্ধবীণা বাজে রুদ্রবীণা ।
 দগড় দগড়ী বায় শত শত জনা ॥
 হাথীর গলাতে ঘণ্টা বাজে ঠনঠনৌ ।
 কাংশ করতাল বাজ করতাল তুনি ॥

(1) *Rudravina*.—A kind of lyre. The following description about 'Vinā' occurs in 'A History of Music' (p. 26) by Messrs. Stanford and Forsyth: "Vinā was originally made of a hollow wooden tube, supported on two empty gourds. At one end were the pegs (generally seven) and at the other a raised 'claw.' The wires ran from this claw or tailed piece to the pegs. But between these wires and the tube itself a number of little brass bridges were interposed. These varied from 19 to 23 or even more. The wires touched only the bridges nearest the pegs and therefore this bridge acted as a sort of 'nut.' The remaining bridges were used like the frets of guitar or mandoline. In other words, the players' fingers depressed the wires on to the bridges at pleasure. The nearer the finger approached the claw the shorter became the vibrating length of the wire and consequently the higher the pitch of the note produced. A metal plectrum was used for plucking the strings." *Rudravina* was made of wood partly covered with leather. It had six strings, which were not metallic ones but were made of hair. A piece of fish-scale was required for plucking the strings. *Rudravina* and two other allied instruments, *Raivina* and *Gandhavinā* may be classed with the species known as harp.

(2) *Dāmāmā*.—A kettle-drum. It was played with a pair of short sticks like *Tikārā*, *Nāgārā* or *Pataha* and *Dagar* all of which were almost similar instruments of music. A drum of a considerably large size was known as *Jaydhāk*. A peculiar kind of kettle-drum was known as *Jagajhampa* which was suspended with a cord from the neck of the man who played on it with a pair of cane-sticks. Feathers of birds were used to decorate *Jagajhampa*. It had always been a favourite instrument of music with the Mahomedans and it is still used by them specially on religious occasions (*cf.* the Arabic *Tambourines*). A kind of *Jagajhampa*

জয়ঢাক বীরঢাক গ্রামসী বাজনা ।
প্রলয় সময়ে যেন পড়য়ে বনবনা ॥
হাতে দামা কাঁখে ঢাল তাল নিশান ।
দামা দরমসা বাজে বাজে সিদ্ধুয়ান ॥'

. The musical instruments, mentioned above were: *Raivina*, *Gandhavinā*, *Rudravina*, *Dagar*, *Dagari*, *Ghantā*, *Karatāl*, *Jaydhāk*, *Birdhāk*, *Dāmāmā*, *Dhol*, *Daramsā* and *Sindhuān*.

was known as Khanjari—a circular instrument, very small in size. Bheri, another kind of kettle-drum, was once a favourite military musical instrument in our country. Our literature gives an abundant reference to this instrument. Akin to Bheri there was also another type known as Dunduvi. Both Bheri and Dunduvi were used in ancient times and are now almost unknown in our country. A special type of drum having only one side to play on was known as Kādā. It too used to suspend from the neck of the player with a cord who struck it with both his hands. Strokes were given by the right hand with the help of a cane-stick and by the left with the palm.¹

(3) *Dhol*.—A kind of drum. Dhol and Dholak were both of the same species of musical instruments, the former being of a larger size than the latter. Dhol used to be hung on the neck of a person by a cord who beat it with his right hand on one side and with a stick on the other. The stick used for the purpose was generally made of a small piece of bamboo with a curved

¹ Cf. The kettle-drums as used in Egypt and Arabia. "Most of their (Arabian) instruments came from the Egyptians..... These primitive kettle-drums are still played in Egypt and Arabia. During the Crusades, they found their way into Europe and were adopted as the earliest form of small kettle-drum. In England their Arabic name Naqqareh became naturalised into the current fourteenth century word Nakers..... They were afterwards superseded by the big Hungarian cavalry-drums (Jaydhāk ?)"—A History of Music by Stanford and Forsyth, p. 23. See Kavikankan's Chandikāvya, p. 94,

‘সাজ সাজ পড়ে ডাক, দামামা দগড় ঢাক’ :

(There was the order to get ready for the battle, when Dāmāmā, Dagar and Dhāk were beaten for the purpose.) See also Ghanarām's Dharmamangal, p. 20,

‘ঘনরোল দামামা দ গড় পড়ে যা’ :

(The musical instruments Dāmāmā and Dagar when beaten gave out a deep note.) See Kavikankan Mukundarām's Chandikāvya, p. 94,

‘জগবম্প বাজে কাড়া’ :

(There were the flourish of music of Jagajhampa and Kādā. See p. 95 of the same work.)

‘বাস্তের নাহি সীমা, বাজে হুন্সুভি দামামা’ :

(There were great display of music specially of Dandubhi and Dāmāmā.) See the Dharma songs by Sitārām Dās, C. U. MS. No. 2471, f. 6,

‘নিদা কাড়া ঢোল, হ'ল গণ্ডগোল, সাজিল রাজার শালা’ :

(There were great noise of musical instruments such as Singā, Kādā and Dhol. The occasion was the preparation of the king's brother-in-law for a battle),

head.¹ A kind of Dhol, named Dimdima, which was used in ancient time, is now out of use. This instrument of music was also in use in many other parts of the world such as Assyria, Babylonia, China and various other countries outside India.²

(4) *Bhorang*.—A kind of pipe. It resembled a telescope in appearance, and consisted of double tubes, one inner and the other outer. Clever manipulation of the instrument produced notes of different pitches. This is now practically out of use. (*Cf.* the double pipes of the Egyptian musical instrument.) Another type of wind instrument was known as Ranasingā—a kind of trumpet—which was chiefly made of bell-metal (*cf.* the metal-trumpet,—the Salpinx,—used in Greece). The Ranasingā (*lit.* battle-horn) was largely in use in ancient time, when the commanders used it in issuing direction to their troops in the battle-field. The instrument may have derived its name from horns from which it had originally

¹ See Kavikankan's Chandikāvya, p. 94.

‘অশীগুণা বাজে ঢোল, তের কাহন সাজে কোল’ :

(There were 320 musicians, beating dhols when the Kol soldiers numbering 208 got themselves in readiness for a battle.) See Kavikankan, p. 95.

‘ডিগ্গিম বাজয়ে কাঢ়া’ :

(The sound of Dimdima and Kādā). See Ghanarām's Dhārmamangal, p. 156.

‘জোড়া কাঢ়া খঞ্জর’ :

(A pair of Kādā and Khanjar.)

² “In the Hindu legends the drum is the characteristic instrument, associated with all the acts of life. And it remains so to-day ... Its two chief types are, and probably always were, the long-drum beaten at both ends either with the hands or with drum-sticks, and the small pair of right and left hand drums, which had their origin in the skin-covered gourd.”

“The Assyrians and Babylonians had also drums.”

“The huge ceremonial drum which is placed in the Eastern Pagoda of the Hall (of China) to balance the principal bell in the western, three other smaller drums are used in the ritual music. One is a large drum (Yung-ku) with a single head of parchment about three feet in diameter. It is beaten three times after each verse of the hymn and each beat is answered by two beats of a slightly smaller double-headed drum known as Tsu-ku. A smaller drum still (Po-fu), whose use is forbidden except for religious purposes, answers the two beats of the middle-sized drum with three strokes—one right-handed, one left-handed, and one double-handed.” See ‘A History of Music’ by Stanford and Forsyth (Macmillan and Co.), pp. 26, 19, and 35.

been made. The Hebrews used ram's horn as their trumpet.¹ Another kind of pipe or flute was known as Venu. Among flutes of different types it was the longest. On one side there was only one opening and on the other were six. (*Cf.* The Greek Aulos which was a wooden pipe, originally containing three or four finger holes).² The Assyrians and Babylonians used clay flutes with two finger-holes. Yet another kind of flute was known as Bansi (*lit.* a pipe made of bamboo). It was originally made with a particular species of bamboo but it is now made of wood, metals and ivory. The length of a Bansi varied from eight 'Angulis' (about four inches) to even more than a cubit. Its upper end was generally kept closed and the lower end open. It had one main opening to blow it with mouth and six other openings for the fingers to play on.³ Popular tradition attributes the credit of its invention to Sri Krishna,—the particular one used by him, according to mythology, was known as Murali.

¹ See Kavikankan's *Chandikāvya*, p. 95.

‘বাত্তের নাহি সীমা দুন্দুভি বাজে দামামা, ঘন শিঙ্গা বাজে পড়া’ :

(There was no dearth of musical instruments. The Dunduvi, Dāmāmā and Singā were all played simultaneously.) See also Ghanarām's *Dharmamangal*, p. 156.

‘ভাঙ ভাঙ রণশিঙ্গা বাজে’ :

(The deep note of Ranasingā was heard.) See also the *Dharmamangal* poems by Rāmnārāyan, C. U. MS. No. 2454, F. 2.

"The twisted ram's horn trumpet was peculiar to the Hebrews. Made from the natural horn, and therefore roughly conical in form, it was consecrated to the service of the temple and found only in the hands of the priestly Levites. Seven of these instruments blown under Joshua's directions by seven priests after they had compassed the city seven times. On the seventh day in combination with the shouting of the Israelites destroyed the wall of Jericho. These instruments were also made from the horns of the koodoos." See 'A History of Music' by Stanford and Forsyth, pp. 21-22.

² See *Viswakosh* and the 'History of Music' by Stanford and Forsyth, pp. 40-41 and 19.

³ *Cf.* the Chinese flute 'Hsiao' with the Venu and Bansi. "The flute (Hsiao), which has now been used in the ritual music for over 600 years, is a bamboo instrument, scientifically much like our (English) keyless flute. It measures $1\frac{2}{10}$ feet long and is provided with an embouchure-hole, five finger-holes and one thumb-hole. Six of these flutes take part in the sacred music. Their use for secular purposes is officially forbidden." See 'A History of Music' by Stanford and Forsyth, p. 35.

(5) *Kāsi*.—A gong,—an instrument made of bell-metal and resembles a plate with raised border. Two openings are made on two sides of it to be held by a piece of chord with the left hand by the person who strikes it with his right hand, by a stick. Another instrument closely resembling a *Kāsi* was known as *Jhānjar* which was formerly used in battles to give signal from a distance. It is now solely used in the religious ceremonies of the Hindus.

(6) *Karatāl or a cymbal*.—Circular in shape it is slightly high in the middle, with an opening in the centre. Through this hole a cord is passed to be held on the raised side by the musician. Two pieces of this round instrument are required to be struck against one another. *Karatāl* is now used mainly in conjunction with *Khol*, a kind of drum which is a favourite instrument of music with the Vaisnavas.

CHAPTER IX.

HINDU-MOSLEM UNITY.

Bengal was under Mahomedan rule for nearly eight centuries. During this period their relationship with the Hindus was on the whole friendly. The Hindus and the Mahomedans could live peacefully if the autocrats would have allowed it, as the peace of the country to a great extent depended on the latter. A good autocrat ruled to the entire satisfaction of all while a bad ruler oppressed both the communities. So whatever differences might have existed they were due to the tyrannical rule of individual autocrats—Hindus certainly not excepted—causing an ever-widening breach between the communities.

Examples are not far to seek. In the days of Hindu rule, *Rājā Mānikchandra's* subjects, as we learn from the *Maināmati* songs, were so opulent that "persons who somehow managed to live, had horses waiting at their doors."¹ "Even the maid-servants disliked ordinary cloths."² "Nobody used the path which was not his own and nobody used the water from the tank not belonging

¹ 'একতন বেকতন কৈরে যে খাইছে তার ছদ্যারত বোড়া' ।

² 'ঘিনে বান্দী নাহি পিন্দে পাটের শাছর' ।

to himself.”¹ Such prosperity was not enjoyed by people for a long time in the past. “An East-Bengal man with a flowing beard came to rule the land under Rājā Mānikchandra. This man imposed exorbitant taxes on his subjects. From a Boḍi and a half he increased the taxes to fifteen gandās. People sold everything—even the ploughs, plough-shares, yokes, and all other requisites of cultivation. They went so far as to sell their children from the bosom of their mothers. The widows and the poor suffered terribly. As a result, the Taluks were turned into jungles.”²

In spite of all poetic exaggerations the story might represent the actual condition of the people when ruled by a whimsical autocrat. The horrible description of the jail in the capital of the Rājā of Singhal in which the merchant Dhanapati was confined, as we learn from the Chandikāvya, probably represents the actual state of affairs of our country in by-gone days.

Kavikankan Mukundaram in depicting the character of Mahmud Sherif, a local officer, who represented the type of the most oppressive rulers, writes thus in his Chandikāvya (Bangabāsi edition):—

“Unfortunately for the people, a Mahomedan Governor named Mahmud Sherif was entrusted with the administration of the Pargana. Under his rule the traders groaned. He made false measurements of land—a Kuḍa was measured at 15 cottas and rents were assessed on waste lands. The poor man’s prayer was not heeded. The moneylenders become exacting. Each rupee was lost by two and a half annas. No purchasers were to be found for cattle or for straw. The land-lord Gopinath Nandi was made a prisoner and the poor people became stunned with

- ১ ‘কারো মাড়াল কেহ না যায় ।
কারো পুকুরিগীর জল কেহ না খায় ॥’
২ ‘ভাটি হইতে আইল বাঙ্গাল লম্বা লম্বা দাড়ি ।
সেই বাঙ্গাল আসিয়া মূলুক কৈল কড়ি ॥
আছিল দেড়বুড়ি খাজনা, লইল পনের গণ্ডা ।
লাঙ্গল বেচার, ছোয়াল বেচার, আরো বেচার কাল ।
খাজনার তাপতে বেচার ছপের ছাওয়াল ॥
রাড়ী কাঙ্গাল হুংবীর বড় হুংব হৈল ।
খানে খানে তালুক সব ছন হৈয়া গেল ॥’

মাণিকচন্দ্র রাজার গান—বঙ্গসাহিত্য পরিচয়, ১ম ভাগ, পৃ: ২৮-২৯ ।

fear and grief. Lest they should abscond constables were appointed to keep watch over every cottage. In deep distress the poor people sold their spades and every utensil they possessed. Things worth a rupee were sold at 10 annas. The poet helped by Srimanta Khan, an inhabitant of Chandibāti, and being counselled by Muniv Khan as to the course he should follow, left Dāmuniyā with his brother Ramānāth.”¹

‘দত্ত রাজা মানসিংহ, বিদুপদাধুজঙ্গম,
গৌড় বঙ্গ উৎকল অদীপ ।
যে মানসিংহের কালে, প্রজার পাপের ফলে,
ডিহীদার মামুদ সরিপ ॥
উজির হোলো রায়জাদা, বেপারিরে দেয় খেদা,
ব্রাহ্মণ বৈক্যবের হল্য অরি ।
মাপে কোণে দিয়া দড়া, পনর কাঠার কুড়া,
নাহি শুনে প্রজার গোঁহারি ॥
সরকার হৈলা কাল, খিল ভূমি লেখে লাল,
বিনা উপকারে খায় ধুতি ।
পোন্ধার হইলা বম, টাকার আড়াই আনা কম,
পাই লভ্য নয় দিন প্রতি ॥
ডিহীদার অবোধ খোজ, কড়ি দিলে নাহি রোজ,
ধাত্ত গরু কেহ নাহি কিনে ।
প্রভু গোপীনাথ নন্দী, বিপাকে হইলা বন্দী,
হেতু কিছু নাহি পরিত্রাণে ॥
পেয়াদা সবার কাছে, প্রজারা পালায় পাছে,
ছয়ার চাপিয়া দেয় খানা ।
প্রজা হইল ব্যাকুলি, বেচে ঘরের কুড়ালি,
টাকার দ্রব্য বেচে দশ আনা ॥
সহায় ত্রীমন্ত খাঁ, চণ্ডীবাটী যার গাঁ,
যুক্তি কৈলা মুনিব খাঁর সনে ।
দামুজা ছাড়িয়া যাই, সঙ্গে রমানাথ ভাই,
পথে চণ্ডী দিলা দরশনে ॥’

—কবিকঙ্কণ মুকুন্দরামের চণ্ডীকাব্য, পৃ: ৩ ।

Mahmud Sherif probably ruled under the Hindu Raja Man Singha, who was then the Governor of Bengal.

The autocrats used to carry away girls, noted for their beauty, by force and marry them against their wish. In Samser Gāzir Gān, an historical work (mid-eighteenth century), we find the following interesting story bearing on the subject :

"The Gāzi once went to a forest for hunting near Jaypur Mandia, a village where lived one Manu Sarkar who had a very beautiful daughter whom her father gave in marriage to a Kulin Brahmin of Mireswari. Once she went to a neighbouring tank for a bath, accompanied by her girl friends, when she was noticed by the Gāzi who was at once charmed by her rare personal beauty. The Gāzi seized her from amongst her companions 'just as a serpent catches a frog.' He was however a sensible person and by way of persuading his own wife to accord her consent to his marrying the girl whom he had captured, said—'Such intermarriages are not new in this country and they are now recognised everywhere.' He did not stop here. According to his wife's advice he tried to console the girl by paying a large sum of money to her father and getting her Hindu husband married again to another beautiful girl of the town of Bhulua."¹

¹ হিন্দুর নন্দিনী বিবাহ ।

একদিন গাজী গেল করিতে শীকার ।
জয়পুর মন্দিয়ার বনের মাঝার ॥
জয়পুরে ছিল এক মহু সরকার ।
কান্হুরাম লঙ্কর হয় ফরজঙ্গ তাহার ॥
সেই মহু সরকারের শ্রদ্ধারী কুমারী ।
কুলীন দামাদে বিভা দিছিল মিরেশ্বরী ॥
পুষ্করী মিলি তারা পুকুরের ধারে ।
গিরেছিল সেই দিন আন করিবারে ॥
নূতন বয়সী বামা জলে বেন উড়ে ।
দেখিয়া গাজীর চিত্ত ধরাইতে নাহে ॥
ইসারা করিল গাজী লোক গেল দূরে ।
গাজী উত্তরিল সেই পুষ্করী পাড়ে ॥

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The carrying away of another Hindu girl by force by an oppressive Kāzi has been vividly described in the story of Maluā in the Mymensingh Ballads. The despot Jehangir Dewan, a great oppressor treated the Hindus and the Mahomedans alike. He oppressed Maluā in a terrible manner, and the Kāzi was beheaded by his order without a hearing. If the chief was a despot, the rigour of his Government fell equally on the two sections of the community.

গজ লোটাইয়া গাজী তুলি নিল ধনী ।
 রাজপথে ভেক ধরি ঘেন নিল কণী ॥
 নিল নিল বলি ডাকে সেই দাসীগণ ।
 বাপে পুত্রে শুনি তারা হৈল অচেতন ॥
 জাতি গেল জাতি গেল কান্দে সর্বজন ।
 কি করিব কোথা যাব করয়ে ভাবন ॥
 আসিতে স্বীকার কৈরে পথে দৈবগতি ।
 পাইলাম রত্ন এক সুন্দরী যুবতি ॥
 যদি রূপা কর মোরে হয় মম কাজ ।
 দেশাচার আছে নাহি এতে লাজ ॥
 এ বলিয়া প্রিয়া হস্তে সমর্পিল বামা ।
 মজুর করিল বিবি ছাড়ি নিজ তামা ॥
 যে ইচ্ছা তোমার প্রভু সে ইচ্ছা আমার ।
 মনে লয় যেই সেই কর আপনার ॥
 কিন্তু হিন্দুত্বা ধনী তুমি মুসলমান ।
 কলেমা পড়াই তারে আনাও ইমান ॥
 তাহার পিতারে আনি রাজি কর গাজী ।
 পূর্বস্বামী বশ কর আল্লা হবে রাজী ॥
 এ বলি রাখিল কন্ঠা করিয়া যতন ।
 হারামি করিতে গাজী না পারে যেমন ॥
 সমসের গাজী মনু সরকারে আনি ।
 প্রণামে নজর দিয়া স্বত্তর হেন জানি ॥
 মিরেখরী হতে আনি পূর্ব দামাদেবে ।
 বিবাহ করাই দিল তুলুয়া নগরে ॥

—সমসের গাজীর গান, পৃ: ৮২-৮৩।

It should be clearly understood that not only did the Hindu girls but the Mahomedan girls also suffer at the hands of the autocratic ruler. The abduction of girls might have been felt more keenly by the Hindus because of the fact that such an occurrence always entailed excommunication and social degradation. These outcastes formed numerous subcastes such as Sherkhāni, Pirāli, Bhairabghataki, Harimajumdāri—all of which were originally pure Brahmins.¹

The Hindu Rājās sometimes were notorious for their tyranny. Chānd Rai, the Foujdar of Gaurdwar was, as we understand from the Vaisnava literature, 'Physically a very strong man and had become the terror of the people. He killed men looted their property, and seized their wives and daughters so that at the mere report of his approach, people of a town or a village fled with their families and treasures.'²

Whims of autocratic rulers always kept the country under a constant alarm in those days. Thus in the Dharmamangal poems, the cruel treatment of Māhudyā towards his nephew Lāusen, the capital sentence which that wicked minister contrived to inflict on Harihar Bāity for the fault of telling the truth—all go to prove that the Hindu and the Mahomedan autocrats had all a common mentality and the question of racial difference cannot be regarded as supplying any evidence with a view to judging their conduct. The legends of the Dharmamangal poems indicate a state of society which though presented in mythical form is but a reflection of what actually happened in the country in those days.³ We find in the 16th and 17th centuries Bir Hāmavira and Chānd Rai committing atrocities on the Hindus in the most cruel and heartless manner.

In the Chaitanya Mangal by Jayānanda is to be found a story about Husen Shah's oppressions of the Hindus though that monarch is known in history as a great patron of vernacular literature.

It is quite natural that these autocrats would often treat people not belonging to their own race with a greater severity. We have heard the story which describes the most inhuman cruelty with which Ballal Sen punished a Mahomedan who had killed a cow,

¹ See N. Vasu's castes and sects of Bengal, Vol. I, Part I, pp. 201-118. See also the works of Harikavindra and Danujāri Misra.

² See Dr. Sen's Vaisnava Literature, p. 136.

³ See the Dharmamangal poems by Ghanarām, Mānik Gānguli and others.

at a place, many hundred miles away from his capital. There are besides examples of tyranny of the Mahomedan Kāzis of which the Hindus were the victims and all this will show that the racial question played at least some part in these matters. The history of Europe of the contemporary period presents a parallel picture of one party persecuting the other among the Roman Catholics and the Protestants. The poets of Manasāṁgāl, specially Bijay Gupta and Bansi Dās, have left some stories for us which in spite of the poetic exaggerations they contain may have some bearing on the actual condition of the country.

We give the following story, taken from Bijay Gupta's Manasāṁgāl (Peary Sankar Gupta's ed.) :—

“The story of Hāsān and Husen.”

“In the south, near the village of Husenhāti, there lived two Mahomedan brothers, named Hāsān and Husen. They were both of notorious characters, great bullies and sworn enemies of the Hindus. There was another rogue also, named Dulā Haldar, a brother-in-law of Husen, who always precedes the latter when he goes. Dulā surpassed Husen in his oppressions which were mainly directed to the Hindus who used to flee away if they happened to meet him. Dulā used to arrest the Hindus and take them to his brother-in-law the Kāzi to be tried for offences such as the carrying of a Tulasi leaf on their head (a practice still prevalent amongst the Vaishnavas). Punishment would now follow as a matter of course. The unfortunate accused used to be assaulted, in accordance with the Kāzi's orders, by Dulā himself who were led to a spot under the shade of a tree. Blows and slaps fell on them as ‘bails in a storm.’ Dulā's Pāiks were particularly hostile to the Brahmins and used in great delight and enthusiasm, to draw them by their neck, tear off their sacred thread and spit into their mouth. Brahmins of a comparatively milder temperament did not use cow-dung for purificatory purposes in their house, any custom savouring of Hinduism being sufficient to invite punishment.”¹

¹ হাসেন হোসেনের পালা ।

দক্ষিণে হোসেনহাটি গ্রামের নিকট ।

তথায় যখন বৈসে ছই বৈটা শঠ ॥

Bansidās furnishes some sidelight in the matter as will appear from the following :

“When the Kāzi learnt that some Hindu milkmen had been engaged in worshipping the goddess Manasā Devi at a certain place, he called out his men to accompany him to the scene. Within a moment a large number of Khojās (eunuchs) and Mahomedans came out and followed him, not one remaining in the town. All of them now arrived at the place where the ceremony was being performed.

The Kāzi's presence filled the hearts of the worshippers with terror and they took to their heels and fled in all directions. But some of them were caught hold of by the Kazi's followers and beaten mercilessly. The sacred jar—an emblem of the deity was broken to

হাসেন হসেন তারা ছই ভায়ের নাম ।
 ছইজনে করে তারা বিপরীত কাম ॥
 কাজিয়ানী করে তারা জানে বিপরীত ।
 তাদের সমুখে নাই হিন্দুয়ানী রীত ॥
 বাহার মাথায় দেখে তুলসীর পাত ।
 হাতে গলে বাকি নেয় কাজির সাক্ষাৎ ॥
 বৃক্ষতলে থুইয়া মারে বজ্রকিল ।
 পাথরের প্রমাণ যেন ঝড়ে পড়ে শিল ॥
 পরের মারিতে কিবা পরের লাগে ব্যথা ।
 চোপড় চাপড় মারে দেয় বাড়কাতা ॥
 এক বেটা হালদায় তার নাম ছুগা ।
 বড় অহঙ্কার করে হোসেনের শালা ॥
 সর্ব্বক্ষণ হোসেনের আগে আগে আসে ।
 তাহার ভয়ে হিন্দুসব পলায় তরাসে ॥
 যে যে ব্রাহ্মণের পৈতা দেখে তারা কান্দে ।
 পেয়াদা বেটা লাগ পাইলে তার গলায় বান্দে ॥
 ব্রাহ্মণ পাইলে লাগ পরম কৌতুকে ।
 তার পৈতা ছিড়ি ফেলে থুথু দেয় মুখে ॥
 ব্রাহ্মণ স্তম্ভন তথায় বসে অতিশয় ।
 গৃহঘর গোময় না দেয় দুর্জনের ভয় ॥ ইত্যাদি ।

—বিজয়গুপ্তের মনসামঙ্গল ।

pieces and the requisites of the ceremony were scattered over and trampled under foot. This done the iconoclasts said their prayer at that very place and forced the Hindus—specially the Brahmins who came there as mere onlookers—to have them circumcised with a view to break their caste. To crown all they desecrated the place by killing cows before they left it.”¹

The people specially the Hindus though generally of a mild temperament were sometimes goaded to desperation by the oppressive conduct of the Mahomedan rulers (who were not certainly many) and were forced to take retaliatory measures. Thus we find the following in the Manasamangal poems by Bansidās :

“ After having desecrated the place of worship of the goddess Manasā Devi by breaking the sacred jar when the Mahomedans headed by the Kāzi were discussing the means of putting the whole village, (peopled by the Hindus), to flame, the devotees, all belonging

১ সাজ সাজ বলিয়া হাসন পাড়ে ডাক ।
একডাকে বাহিরিল খোজা তিন লাখ ॥
• • • • •
ঘন ঘন সারাকান্টি পড়িল নগরে ।
একজন মুসলমান না রৈল সহরে ॥
আসিয়া মিলিল সবে পদ্মাপূজা স্থান
ইদেখিয়া হিন্দুয়ানের উড়িল পরাণ।
কেহ পলাইয়া গেল কেহ দিল লড় ।
কেহকে মারিল বাড়ি করে ধড় ধড় ॥
পূজাভাঙ্গি ঘটবারি ভাঙ্গিয়া ফেলায় ।
যতেক মঙ্গল দ্রব্য পাড়ে ছই পায় ॥
ব্রাহ্মণের জাতিনাশ করিবার ছলে
কর্ণেত কলিমা পড়ে যবন সকলে ॥
আসিছিল যতলোক দেখিবারে ব্রত ।
জুলুম করিয়া সবে করিল হ্রত ॥
গোহত্যা করিল তথা করিয়া জ্বর
তদন্তরে সবগুলা চলি গেল ঘর ॥

—বংশীদাসের মনসামঙ্গল ।

to the Goālā (milkmen) caste could restrain themselves no longer. They attacked the Mahomedans furiously and the latter found themselves powerless with no other course left open to them than to take to their heels. But many could not escape. Minā Kāzi was one of them. He was surrounded by the milkmen and bound hand and foot. He was then beaten and put to abject humiliation. A goat's skin was tied round his neck and all jeered at the predicament in which he was thus placed. The vindictive measures went further still. They burnt the Korān and other sacred scriptures of the Mahomedans. They tore off his beard and when he was let off he was barely alive. The milkmen now have had their bath, worshipped the goddess, after which they left the place.¹

The Mahomedan rulers were sometimes noted for governing the country in the most beneficent manner. The names of the Sultans Ghyāsuddīn, Nasirā Shah and Husen Shah as also the names of the Governors Parāgal Khan and Chhuti Khan are instances of these types of rulers. The Maithili poet Vidyāpati spoke of and Nasirāh. Shah in the following terms :

এই সব যুক্তি তারা করই বসিয়া ।
 হেনকালে গোপ সব আইল সাজিয়া ॥
 ধর ধর মার মার বলে গোপগণে ।
 মিনা সব পলাইল ভয় পায়্যা মনে ॥
 বনে কোপে গেল তারা লড়ালড়ি পাড়ি ।
 মিনা কাজি পলাইতে ধরিলেক বেড়ি ॥
 ধরিয়া বাঞ্চিল তারে ছান্দাদড়ি দিয়া ।
 মুষ্টি প্রহার করে বুকেন্ত বসিয়া ॥
 কাটা ছাগলের চর্খ গলে দিয়া মালা ।
 হাততালী দিয়া তারে মারে ঘন ঠেলা ॥
 কিতাব কোরাণ কত পুড়িল সকল ।
 ঝাড়ি উপাড়িয়া প্রাণে রাখিল কেবল ॥
 তার পরে ছাড়ি দিল জ্বরল দেখিয়া ।
 গান করি পদ্মাপুজে হরবিত্ত হৈয়া ॥

—বংশীদাসের মনসামঙ্গল ।

"Nasirāh Shah who knows love matters quite well, cupid pierced with his dart. The poet Vidyāpati says 'Long live the Emperor of the five Gaudas.'¹ The poet elsewhere spoke of his lord Sultan Ghyāsuddin.²

Nasirā Shah ruled Bengal for forty years till 1325 A.D. It is said that it was Nasirā Shah who first initiated the translation of the Mahābhārata in Bengali from Sanskrit. It was however the age of Husen Shah, (15th century) which might be compared to that of Queen Elizabeth of England (16th century) in respect of the advancement of vernacular literature under State patronage. Like Elizabeth who patronised Spenser, Marlowe, Shakespeare and a lot of other poets and writers, Husen Shah befriended the vernacular poets of Bengal, such as Mālādhār Basu, Bijay Gupta, Jasorāj Khan and a host of others.

It was at the initiation of Husen Shah that Mālādhār Basu translated the Bhāgavata into Bengali in 1480 and received from his kind master the title of Gunarāj Khan.³ Bijoy Gupta, the celebrated poet of the Padmā Purān referred to Husen Shah as being the best of all monarchs.⁴ Jasoraj Khan said, 'His

১ 'সো নসিরা সাহ জানে ।
যাক হাণিল মদন বাণে ॥
চিরজীব রহ পঞ্চ গৌড়েশ্বর,
কবি বিজ্ঞাপতি ভাণে ।'

—বিজ্ঞাপতি, পৃ: ২৮ (N. Gupta's Ed.).

২ 'প্রভু গয়াসুদ্দিন সুলতান ।'

—বিজ্ঞাপতি ।

৩ 'নিগুণ অধম মুক্তি নাহি কোন গ্রাম ।
গৌড়েশ্বর দিল নাম গুণরাজ খান ॥'

—ভূমিকা, মালধর বসুর ভাগবতের অম্বুবাদ ।

(I have no qualities and have no village in my possession. My name 'Gunarāj Khan' (lit. possessor of all virtues) has been given to me by the Lord of Gaud). Preface to the Bengali translation of the Bhāgavata by Mālādhār Basu).

৪ 'সুলতান হুসেন সাহা নৃপতিতিলক ।'

—বিজয়গুপ্তের মনসামঙ্গল, পৃ: ৮

Majesty Husen Shah who is the ornament of the world knows the emotion well.¹

The noble spirit of the master was a source of inspiration to his courtiers and thus Parāgal Khan who was a commander and Governor under him, patronised Kavindra Parameswar, the celebrated poet of the day and advised him to translate the Sanskrit Mahābhārat into Bengali, a portion of which (up to the Strree Parva) thus was rendered into our vernacular. Parāgal was the Governor of Chittagong where he ruled semi-independently. Parāgal's worthy son Chhuti Khan followed in the wake of his father and appointed one Srikanan Nandi to continue the work of translation and bring it down to the Aswamedh Parva. Kavindra eulogised Husen Shah in glowing terms in his work.

Srikanan Nandi was also similarly full of panegyrics for these • Mahomedan rulers as we find in the opening chapter of his work.

Not only in social matters but also in religion, the communities joined hands and as a result a common god evolved known as Satya Pir, worshipped both by the Hindus and the Mahomedans. The very name of this god indicates his connection with both the communities, the word itself being a combination of Sanskrit and Arabic.

The abjuration of Islamism by the Mahomedans and their adoption of Vaisnavism are well-known in the Vaishnava history. The conversion of the Mahomedan saint, who afterwards became known as Haridas Sadhu, is known to all. The conversion of one Bijuli Khan and some other Pathans as found in Chaitanya Charitamrita, Madhyakhanda² is also interesting indeed.

At another place of the same work we find the following interesting incident in which Husen Shah, the Emperor of Gaufl, spoke of Chaitanya Dev as God personified. He said :³

¹ 'শ্রীমন্ত হসন অগত জুবন, লোহ এরস জান ।
পক গোড়েশ্বর ভোগপুরন্দর ভনে বশরাজ খান ।

—রসমঞ্জরী, পৃঃ ৮ ।

² See Chaitanya Charitāmrita, Madhyakhanda, pp. 736-743.

³ গোড়েশ্বর যবনরাজা প্রভাব ভনিঞা ।
কহিতে লাগিলা কিছু বিদ্রিত হইয়া ॥

"As people are flocking to see him in such a large number, though they do not receive anything from him, shows that the man thus followed must be a saint. I command the Kazis and Mussalmans in general not to molest him. Let him say anything that he desires. The Sultan next enquired of Kesab Chhatri about Chaitanya Dev, who was a follower of the latter and who apprehended evil designs of the Sultan thus replied with a view to shielding the Great Saint : ' Your Majesty should consider Chaitanya Deva as a common Sannyasi and a beggar. Very few people go to him. Your co-religionists magnify the truth. It is no use

বিনা দানে এত লোক যার পাছে পায় ।
সেই ত গোসাক্ষি ইহা জানিহ নিশ্চয় ॥
কাজি যবন কেহু গ্রিহার না কর হিংসন ।
আপন ইচ্ছায় বলুন যাহা ইহার মন ॥
কেশব ছত্রীয়ে রাজা বার্তা যে পুছিল ।
প্রভুর মহিমা ছত্রী উড়াইয়া দিল ॥
ভিক্ষারী সন্ন্যাসী করে তীর্থ পর্যটন ।
তারে দেখিবারে আইসে ছইচার জন ॥
যবনে তোমার ঠাই করয়ে লাগনি ।
তার হিংসায় লাভ নাহি হয় মাত্র হানি ॥
রাজারে প্রবোধি ছত্রী ব্রাহ্মণ পাঠাইয়া ।
বলিবার তরে প্রভুরে পাঠাইল কহিয়া ॥
দবীর খাসেরে রাজা পুছিল নিভূতে ।
গোসাক্ষির মহিমা তেহে লাগিলা কহিতে ॥
যে তোমারে রাজ্য দিল তোমারে গোসাক্ষী ।
তোমার ভাগ্যে তোমার দেশে জন্মিল আসিঞা ॥
তোমার মঙ্গল বাঞ্ছে বাক্য সিদ্ধ হয় ।
ইহার আশীর্ব্বাদে তোমার সর্ব্বজেন্তে জয় ॥
মোরে কেনে পুছ তুমি পুছ আপন মন ।
তুমি নরাধিপ হও, বিষ্ণু অংশ সম ॥
তোমার চিন্তে চৈতন্তের কৈছে হয় জ্ঞান ।
তোমার চিন্তে যেই লয়ে সেই ত প্রমাণ ॥

taking any notice of this poor fellow.' Thus consoling the Sultan, Kesab secretly despatched a Brahmin to Chaitanya to communicate what conversation had taken place between him and the Sultan. The Sultan afterwards conferred with Dobir Khas, his minister, about the Lord all alone. The minister spoke in glowing terms about the greatness of the Lord. He said that it was Chaitanya Deva himself who has endowed you with your kingdom. It was due to your luck that such a great saint had been born in your kingdom. The Lord is your well-wisher and surely the Sultan would attain all-round prosperity by his benediction. He further told the Sultan that there was no need of his asking him those questions about the Lord, that he himself could consult his own mind and understand all. 'You are,' said he, 'the Lord of Navadvip and so you have some godliness in you from whom emanate all the powers of the earthly rulers. Your intellect must therefore be very pure and therefore the receptacle of all true knowledge.' The Sultan said that he believed Chaitanya Deva to be no other than God personified. Thus declaring his opinion about the Lord, the Sultan closed the conference and entered his harem."

In Chaitanya Charitāmrita we find a certain Kazi addressing Chaitanya as his god.¹

রাজা কহে তুমি মোর চিন্তে যেই লয় ।
সাক্ষাৎ ঈশ্বর ইহঁো নাহিক সংশয় ॥
এত বলি রাজা গেল নিজ অভ্যস্তর ।
দবীরবাস আইলা তবে আপনার ঘর ॥

—চৈতন্য চরিতামৃত, মধ্যখণ্ড, পৃঃ ২৮-২৯ ।

¹ See Chaitanya Charitāmrita, Adikhanda, pp. 449-450.

পীরের লেপনি পরে শুয়ে নিজা যায় ।
নিশি শেষে দেখে স্বপ্ন প্রভুর রূপায় ॥
উদয়পুরে ছিল এক মাতাঠাকুরাণী ।
মহারাজ নিত্য পূজা যোগাইত আনি ॥
• • • • •
উত্তরমুখি ছিল দেবী দক্ষিণমুখি হল ।
গাঙ্গীর শিররে আলি স্বপ্ন দেখাইল ॥

The Mahomedans who were at first great iconoclasts thus gradually succumbed to the religious influences of the Hindus. Not only many of them became staunch Vaishnavas but many began to worship the goddess Kali, Sitalā Devi, Saraswati, Siva, etc.

Samser Gāzi, the hero of Samser Gāzir Gan, is said to have once had a dream wherein he found the goddess Kali, worshipped in the family of the Tipperah Raj, appearing before him and saying, "Listen to me, Oh Gāzi, see I have come to grant you a boon. You will win your battles easily if you would only worship me by sacrificing a human being at my altar." The Goddess is said to have appeared to him again and in a dream pressed the same proposal when the Gāzi said hesitatingly, "You are the goddess of the Hindus; I being a Mahomedan, how can I worship you." The goddess, however, persuaded him in the end to worship him through the intermediary of a Brahmin and as a result of this he won the battles.

The following few lines will throw a flood of light on the friendly feeling that existed between the two communities :

"In a work called 'Imām Yātrār Puntbi' we find that the Mahomedan author has a hymn addressed to Saraswati, the goddess of Learning. In 'Yāmini Vahāl' of Karimulla, a Mahomedan is found to pray before the god Çiva. Aptabuddin, the poet of 'Jāmil Dilārām,' sent his hero to the nether world 'to seek a boon from the

১ তনরে সমসের গাঙ্গী চেয়ে দেখ মোরে ।
 আসিয়াছি হেথা আমি বর দিতে তোরে ॥
 মাতাঠাকুরাণী আমি দেবী চিহ্ন কার ।
 নিদ্রা ছাড়ি উঠ যুদ্ধ জিনিবে হেলায় ॥
 কিন্তু মোরে মহাবলী দেও ত্বরমান ।
 অবশ জিনিবা যুদ্ধ হইবে কল্যাণ ॥

 পূর্বমতে স্বপ্নে দেবী বলিতে লাগিল ।
 তনি বিপরীত বাক্য গাঙ্গী উত্তরিল ॥
 আমি হই মোছলমান আপনি ঐশ্বরী ।
 কেমনে হিন্দুর কাজ বল আমি করি ॥

Saptarsies or the seven sages of the Hindus.' In the 'Bheluā Sundari' of Hamidulla, the Brahmins consulted the Koran to find out an auspicious day.

The poet Karamali, the celebrated writer of the 'Padas,' dedicated to Radha and Krishna many of his poems.

A class of Mahomedans earned their livelihood by singing the praises of the Hindu Goddess Lakshmi.

There are numerous instances in our old Bengali literature of a cordial and friendly relationship subsisting between the Hindus and Mahomedans in the remote past and the examples I have introduced in this chapter will, I trust, prove this.

CHAPTER X.

ARCHITECTURE.

The architectural specialities of old Bengal though not many, deserve special notice, inasmuch as they show the extent to which they are indebted to the architecture of other parts of India and to what extent they are indigenious. The people of Bengal developed a peculiar style which contributed much to the general improvement of the art. The Islamic conquest gave an impetus to the architectural development of the whole country, and Bengal, like all other parts of India, felt the impulse in no small degree. "Indo-Saracenic"

দেবী বলে সকলই বিধাতার হাত ।
যখন বাহারে চাহে করেছে নিপাত ॥
তাহার নিকটে জান সকলই সমান ।
নাহিক প্রভেদ কিছু হিন্দু মুসলমান ॥
স্বহস্তে না দেও পূজা ডাকহ ব্রাহ্মণে ।
নতুবা জিনিতে তুমি না পারিবা রণে ॥
হেন মতে তিনবার স্বপ্ন দেখাইল ।
শুনিয়া বুদ্ধের কথা মনে ভয় পেল ॥
প্রভাতে উঠিয়া গাজি ভাবি মনে মন ।
উপহারে দিল পূজা ডাকিয়া ব্রাহ্মণ ॥ ইত্যাদি ।

—সমসের গাজীর গান, পৃ: ৫৫-৫৭ ।

was the name applied to this style of architecture by Mr. Fergusson, who made the following observation :—

“It is easy to understand, on the other hand, why, in Bengal, the trabeate style never was in vogue. The country is practically without stone, or any suitable material for forming either pillars or beams. Having nothing but brick, it was almost of necessity that they employed arches everywhere, and in everything that had any pretensions to permanency. The Bengal style being, however, the only one wholly of brick in India proper, has a local individuality of its own, which is curious and interesting, though from the nature of material, deficient in many of the higher qualities of art which characterise the buildings constructed with larger and better materials. Besides elaborating a pointed-arched brick style of their own, the Bengalis introduced a new form of roof, which has had a most important influence on both the Mahomedan and Hindu styles in more modern times. As already mentioned in describing the Chhatri at Alwar, the Bengalis, taking advantage of the elasticity of the bamboo universally employ in their dwellings a curvilinear form of roof, which has become so familiar to their eyes, that they consider it beautiful. It is so in fact when bamboo and thatch are the materials employed, but when translated into stone or brick architecture, its taste is more questionable.....Be this as it may, certain it is, at all events, that after being elaborated into a feature of permanent architecture in Bengal, this curvilinear form found its way in the 17th century to Delhi and in the 18th to Lahore, and all the intermediate buildings from say A.D. 1650, betray its presence to a greater or less extent.”¹

The old Bengali literature is full of description of these architectural peculiarities which are noticed in the following pages. In spite of poetic exaggerations, excellent descriptions are to be found in it, giving, in detail, the mode of construction of temples, towns, houses, etc., each of which is dealt with separately.

Temple.

The building of temples once attained a high degree of perfection as is evidenced from a Dasyu-made temple at Bankura. The

¹ See History of Indian and Eastern Architecture by Fergusson.

following description occurs in the Chandikāvya by Dwija Kamal-lochana about the construction of a temple.

"The architect-god Viswakarmā with his colleagues and assistants applied himself to the task of building the temple of the goddess Ambikā. The temple was built with stones of various colours. Such was the enthusiasm displayed by the architects on the occasion that not a moment was lost and work continued throughout the whole night with the help of lamps made of precious gems. Big blocks of stones were broken into smaller pieces for the pavement of the temple-yard. Between the pieces of stones, valuable gems of variegated colours were inlaid and the effect of the workmanship thus produced was simply wonderful. The colours that were chosen on the occasion were blue, black, white, red and golden. The spire was fitted with a golden vase

সঙ্গে লয়ে শিল্পিগণ, বিশ্বকর্মা দিল মন
অধিকার দেহরা নিশ্চিতে ।
নানাবর্ণে আনি শিলা দেউল নির্মাণ কৈলা
শিল্পিগণ লয়া সাবহিতে ॥
চারি প্রহর রাতি আলিয়া রত্নের বাতি
জাগরণে করে নিরমাণ ।
নানারূপ কৈল তাথে আপনার মনোরথে
শিরে পরি অভয়া চরণ ॥
বগু বগু করি শিলা নানারত্ন আরোপিলা
তার মধ্যে মধ্যে দিল শিলা ।
নীল রক্ত শ্বেত রক্ত তাহাতে সুবর্ণ বেক্ত
পদ্মবর্ণ কৈল নিয়োজনা ॥
দেউল উপর ভাগে পদ্মবর্ণ তাতে লাগে
কণক কলস লাগে চূড়ে ।
তাহাতে পতাকা নেতে রক্তবর্ণ বাস তাতে
পবনে সমূলে তাহে উড়ে ॥
নানারূপ বেড়া কৈল তাহাতে দর্পণ দিল
হীরা মতি কাঞ্চন সহিতে ।
দেখিতে হৃন্দর তায় নানারূপে নিরমায
শিল্পিগণ লয়া সাবহিতে ॥

and a black pinnace which fluttered in the sky. The walls were built with sundry materials and contained glasses mounted with precious jewels. The magnificent gateways to the temple were four in number, consisting of golden doors. Gold coins were stuck to them to enhance their brilliance. The floor inside the temple was decorated with stones of different colours. Here an altar was made for the image, in front of which another circular altar was constructed, set with coins. To the west of the temple a hundred stone-houses were built, furnished with all the requisites of worship. To the east of the temple, houses for keeping the sacrificial fire ablaze were constructed with precious stones. The architect Viswakarmā then gave his attention to the building of an amusement-hall in the south using his measuring-tape all the while. This magnificent hall was made of stone with excellent sitting accommodation. To the south-east was built a house for the musicians. Its height was great (*lit. one yojana*). Other quarters were then constructed by Viswakarmā for the accommodation of guests. To the northern side of the temple, artistic cooking-sheds were constructed at a considerable expense. These houses contained crystal

দেউলের চারি দ্বার রূপে থও অঙ্ককার
কণক কপাট চারি দ্বারে ।
তাথে দিল বহুধন যেন স্থা কিরণ
সন্তোষ করিতে অধিকারে ॥
দেউলের মধ্যভাগে নানাবর্ণে শিলা লাগে
প্রতিমা স্থাপিতে বেদী কৈল ।
তাহার সম্মুখে কৈল মণ্ডলের বেদী হৈল
বহু ধন তাথে লাগাইল ॥
পাশাণে নির্মাণ দ্বার একশত মনোহর
দেউলের পশ্চিম ভাগেতে ।
তাহাতে সুসজ্জ কৈল নানারূপে নির্মাইল
রচনা বান্ধিতে বিদ্যমতে ॥
দেউলের পূর্বে কৈল হেমশালা নির্মাইল
নানা রঙে বিচিত্র নির্মাণ ।
বিদ্যমতে মুণ্ড করে স্থা ধরি মধ্য দ্বারে
বিশ্বকর্মা হুয়া সাবধান ॥

pillars and doors. The whole edifice was surrounded with high walls measuring a hundred cubits in length with stone-gates on four sides. A very big tank was excavated by Viswakarmā inside the temple. Its ghats were all made of stones. Its water was as clear and transparent as crystal with clustering lotuses floating on the surface visited

দক্ষিণেতে দিল মন সঙ্গে লয়া শিল্পিগণ
নাটশালা করয়ে নির্মাণ ।
পাথরে করিল ঘর দেখি তাহা মনোহর
শিরে ধরি অম্বিকাচরণ ।
বসিতে সর্বজন কৈল দিব্য ভবন
নানাবর্ণে পাথরে নির্মিল ।
তাতে লাগে বহুধন কলমল অমুকণ
বহুবিধ সুসজ্জ করিল ॥
অগ্নিকোণে বাজঘর দেখি অতি মনোহর
উচ্চ কৈল যোজন প্রমাণ ।
আর যত ভবন রহিতে অতিথিগণ
গড়ে বিশা করিয়া যতন ॥
দেউলের উত্তর দ্বারে দিব্য ভোগশালা করে
নানাদনে দেখিতে সুন্দর ।
সেহিত ভবন মাঝে ফটিকের স্তম্ভ সাজে
দ্বারেতে কপাট মনোহর ॥
বিশ্বকর্মা দিয়া মন সহেন্দ্রক ভবন
যত্নে কৈল দুর্গার পুরীতে ।
পাথানে বেড়িল পুরী শত হাত উচ্চ করি
চারি দ্বারে কপাট শিলাতে ।
পুরী মধ্যে সরোবরে বিশাই নির্মাণ করে
দীর্ঘ প্রস্থ প্রমাণ বিশাল ।
পাথরে বাকিল ঘাট আর যত নাছ বাট
তাতে তোর ফটিক আকার ।
জলেতে পঙ্কজ শোভে অলি ভ্রমে মধু লোভে
তীরে তরু দেখিতে সুন্দর ॥

by the bees in quest of honey. The banks were all covered with trees and flower-gardens scattering fragrance in all directions.”¹

A second account of temple-building is given below from Kavi-Kankan Mukundarām's Chandikāvya, pp. 32-33.²

পুষ্পের উজ্জান করে দেখি অতি মনোহরে
সৌরভ ধাইছে দিগন্তর ॥
আনন্দিতে বিশ্বকর্ষ পুরে করে নানা কর্ম
অভয়ার মনোরথ কাজে ।
প্রতিমা আনিয়া যবে দেউলে স্থাপিল তবে
কৈলাস সমান পুরী সাজে ॥” ইত্যাদি ।

—বিজয়কমললোচনের চণ্ডীকাব্য,

বঙ্গসাহিত্যপরিচয়, প্রথম ভাগ,

পৃ: ৩০৭-৩০৮ ।

২ সাতার বন্দে বিশাই করিলেন স্থতা ।
ইন্দ্রনীল পাষাণে রচিত কৈল পোতা ॥
মুণ্ডে আরোপিয়া গিরি আনে হনুমান ।
নিশির ভিতরে দেউল করিল নির্মাণ ॥
হীরা-নীলা-মরকতে করিলেন চূড়া ।
রসাল দর্পণে তার চারিদিগ বেড়া ॥
ধবল চামর শিরে ত্রিশাখ পতাকা ।
রাকাপতি বেড়ি যেন ফিরয়ে বলাকা ॥
থরে থরে প্রবাল মুকুতা পাতি পাতি ।
পূর্ণিমা সমান হৈল অমাবস্তা রাত্রি ॥
নানা চিত্র করিল যে করিয়া যুগতি ।
হেমময় তথি আরোপিয়া ভগবতী ॥
কাঞ্চনের ছইঝারি বৃষভে মহেশ ।
ময়ূরে কার্তিক লেখে মূবতে গণেশ ॥
হনুমান অভয়ার লয়ে অমুমতি ।
পাষাণে রচিত কৈল পূজার পদ্ধতি ॥
নখে কোড়ে হনুমান দীঘি সরোবর ।
চারিধান পাহাড় কৈল যেন মহীধর ॥

"First a measurement was taken by Viswakarmā with a piece of thread. Then the plinths were made with a kind of blue stones. Hanumān brought an entire hill, carrying it on his head, for the construction of the temple of Chandi. In course of a single night the temple was constructed by Viswakarmā. The spire was decorated with diamonds, emeralds and sapphires. Looking glasses were fitted on the sides of the spire. A white *chouerie* and triple flags also decorated it. Arrays of corals and pearls shed such a brilliant lustre in the temple that it seemed that the darkness of the new-moon night had been replaced by the grandeur of the full moon. Pictures of various descriptions were made to adorn the temple of the goddess Chandi. The image of the goddess was made of gold and two golden jugs were placed on either side. The image of the god Siva seated on his favourite bull, the god Kartikeya, mounted on his peacock, and the god Ganesh on his mouse were all made of gold. Hanumān dug tanks by simply scratching the earth. Their banks resembled small hillocks, so much earth was taken out to make the tanks deep. The ghats and paths were all constructed with stones of various colours. The water of the river Bhogavati (which flows in the nether world) oozed up to fill the tanks. Fruit and flower gardens were finally laid out on the sides of the tanks."

Yet another description of a temple by the celebrated poet Bharatchandra may not be quite out of place here.¹

পাষাণে রচিত কৈল চারিখান খাট ।
নানাবর্ণ পাষাণে রচিত নাছবাট ॥
শূভ দেখি সরোবর বীর মহাবল ।
পাতাল ভেদিয়া তোলে ভোগবতী জল ॥
সরোবর বেড়ি বিশাই করিল উজ্জান ।
রসাল পনস রস্তা রোপে হনুমান ॥" ইত্যাদি ।

কবিকঙ্কণ মুকুন্দরামের চণ্ডীকাব্য, পৃঃ ৩৩ ।

১ বিশ্বকর্মা ত্বনি, নিম্নপুণ্য ত্বনি,
দেউল কৈলা নির্মাণ ।

"The architect-god Viswakarma made the temple of Annapurnā with precious stones. The altar raised on this occasion was also made of gems. Viswakarmā himself was struck with the beauty of the temple. He raised walls round the temple and inside it excavated a tank with ghats, adorned with diamonds. The four sides of the tank were decorated with emeralds and sapphires. The *Pāṭāl-Ganga* or the *Bhogavati* (which flows in the Hades) oozed up into the tank, such was its depth. The water was very cool, odorous, deep and pure. Crystal swans were made for the tank. Their beaks and feet were made with corals. Their feet were made specially red. Lotuses of various kinds were artistically made with various precious stones and the bees on them were also

রতন দেউল, ভুবনে অতুল,
কোটি রসি পরকাশ ।
দেউল ভিতরে মণিবেদীপরে,
চিন্তামণির প্রতিমা ।

দেউলের শোভা দেখি বিশাই মহিলা ।
চৌদিকে প্রাচীর দিয়া পুরী নির্মাইলা ।
সম্মুখে করিলা সরোবর মনোহর ।
মানিকে বাক্সিলা ঘাট দেখিতে সুন্দর ॥
সূর্য্যকান্ত চন্দ্রকান্ত আদি মণিগণ ।
দিয়া কৈলা চারিপার অতি সুশোভন ॥
তুলিলা পাতাল-গঙ্গা ভোগবতী জল ।
সুশীতল সুবাসিত গভীর নির্মল ॥
গড়িলা ফটিক দিয়া রাজহংসগণ ।
প্রবালে গড়িলা ঠোট সুরঙ্গচরণ ॥
সূর্য্যকান্ত মণি দিয়া গড়িলা কমল ।
চন্দ্রকান্ত মণি দিয়া গড়িলা উৎপল ॥
নীলমণি দিয়া গড়ে মধুকর পাতি ।
নানা পক্ষী জলচর গড়ে নানা জাতি ॥ ইত্যাদি ।

made with azure-coloured gems. Birds and aquatic animals of multifarious types were also formed of the same kinds of precious materials."

The following account of temple-building is to be found in the Dharmamangal poems of Sitārām Dās.¹

"The temple of Kāmakhyā Devi was situated in the south-west of the city of Kamrup. The area of the temple extended over one 'yoyana' (twelve miles). There the conch-shells sounded even without being blown. There were the flags attached to the staffs to adorn the temple. The temple itself was five thousand cubits in height and the flags one thousand cubits. There were forty-eight gates and eighty-eight stations for the sentries. The northern side of the temple was occupied by the Yogis and the north-eastern by the Dākinis, engaged in performing mystic rites. The hero Kālu surveyed everything in connection with the temple."

In spite of poetic exaggerations, apparent in these descriptions, it cannot be denied that there are some grains of truth in them. Elaborate description of stones being used as materials leads us to suppose that though brick was the usual material, stone was not quite unknown. Although Fergusson is loath to give the Bengalis the credit of possessing any knowledge of stone-buildings, he has been constrained to admit that they knew the use of a kind of black marble which according to him, 'seems to be an indurated potstone

কামাখ্যার মেড় গিয়া পাইল ঈশানে ।
দর্শমঙ্গল সীতারামদাস ভণে ॥
দেখিল দেবীর মেড় যোজনপ্রমাণ ।
বিণা বায় শব্দ বাজে দণ্ডীর নিশান ॥
পাঁচ হাজার হাত উচ্চ দেউল গঠন ।
পতাকা হাজার হাত ঠেকিল গগন ॥
বারগুণা দেহারী বাইশ গুণা থানা ।
উত্তর দেউল দেখে যোগীদের থানা ॥
ঈশানে ডাকিনী সাধে আপন সাধন ।
কালুবীর সকল করেন নিরীক্ষণ ॥

দর্শরাজের গীত, সীতারাম দাস ।

of very fine grain, and which takes a beautiful polish. Many fragments of Hindu art in this material are found among the ruins, and if carefully examined might enable us to restore the style.¹

One of the peculiar features in connection with the building of temples was the use of glass.² These were fitted to the walls and even to the spires, probably to enhance the lustre when the sun's rays were reflected upon them. The whole temple thus looked dazzling and inspired awe and reverence in the minds of the pious pilgrims.

It appears that the materials ordinarily used for the construction of spires were of different colours—blue, black, white, red and yellow.

¹ See History of Indian and Eastern Architecture, by Fergusson, Vol. I, p. 253.

² See History of Indian and Eastern Architecture, by Fergusson, Vol. I, pp. 322-325 :—

"There is one other peculiarity common to both Hindu and Jaina architecture in the north of India that requires notice, before proceeding to describe particular examples. It is the form of the towers or spires called *Sikhara* '*Vimanas*' which invariably surmount the cell in which the images of the *Tirthankaras* are invariably placed in oblong or square-cells and those of Hindu deities in square—generally cubical cells of no great dimension, and that these cells receive their light from the doorway only. It seems also an invariable rule that the presence and position of the cell should be indicated externally by a tower and spire, and that these towers though square or nearly so in plan should have a curvilinear outline in elevation..... Take for instance the celebrated Black Pagoda at Kanarak in Orissa. The upper part of the tower, to some extent, overhangs its base.

It bends inward towards the summit, and is surmounted by what is called an '*Amlaka*'—a massive circular coping stone, which supports a vase called '*amritakalasa*' or '*Amrita-karaka*,' i.e., '*dew-vessel*.' Whatever its origin this '*amlaka*' is generally surmounted by a flat dome of reverse curvature, in the centre of which stands the '*Kalasa*' '*Karaka*,' or pinnacle, in the form of a vase, generally of very beautiful and graceful design. The one hypothesis that occurs to me as sufficient to account for this peculiarity is to assume that it was a constructive necessity. If we take for instance an assumed section of the diagram (Woodcut No. 184, p. 324), it will be seen how easily a very tall pointed horizontal arch, like that of the Treasury at Mycenae referred to above, p. 312, would fit its external form. In that case we might assume that the tower at Bodhi-Gaya took a straight-lined form like the doorway at Missolonghi and the gate of Lions at Mycenae, while the Hindus took the more graceful curvilinear shape, which certainly was more common in remote classical antiquity, and as is found in Persia may have reached India at a remote period."

The spire contained a vase (usually golden) which was characteristic of a temple.¹

The pillars² seem to be an essential element in the construction of temples. The description of crystal pillars by poets as mentioned before might not be all a myth.

We hear of these crystal pillars even in our nursery stories. The use of crystal which is found not only in connection with the pillars but also in general construction-works, as will be shown later on, prove extensive glass trade in Bengal. This fact is also substantiated by the *Manasāmangal* poems (as of *Bansidās*) wherein we find mention of glass as an important item of export. The 'Periplus of the Erythrean sea' fully substantiates this fact. Mention of crystal is also found in the *Mahābhārata*, *Savā Parva*, wherein we learn that *Duryyodhana* mistook a piece of crystal to be water and thereby got discomfited. Pillars whether made of crystal or some other materials are in themselves sufficiently interesting and as such deserve special notice.³

The following parts of a temple are worthy of special mention :—

- | | | |
|------------|-----|---------|
| (i) পোতা | ... | Plinth. |
| (ii) বেড়া | ... | Wall. |
| (iii) কলস | ... | Vessel. |

¹ See among others *Sunya Purān* (*Dharmasthān*) by *Rāmāi Pandit* (10th-11th century).

² See among others *Rāmāi Pandit's Sunya Purān* (*Dharmasthān*).

³ "The pillars (i. e., *stambhas* or *Lāts*) are common to all the styles of Indian architecture. With the Buddhists they were employed to bear inscriptions on their shafts, with emblems or animals on their capitals. With the Jains they were generally *Dipdāns* or lamp-bearing pillars, but sometimes supporting quadruple figures of a *Jina*; with the *Vaiṣṇavas* they as generally bore statues of *Garuda* or *Hanuman*; with the *Saivas* they bore the *trisula* symbol or were *Dipdāns* and flagstaves; but, whatever their destination, they were always among the most original and frequently the most elegant, production of Indian art.

"In the south of India among the Jains, as mentioned in a later chapter, such pillars are very common, usually standing singly in front of the temples, and were apparently intended to carry quadruple figures of *Tirthankaras* known as *Chaumukha*. One class of the *stambhas* at Hindu temples was intended to carry lamps at Festivals of which woodcut No. 203 (*Kailas temple, Elara*) represents a specimen, but another class the *Dhwaja-stambhas* like the above at *Elara*, are frequently in pairs and bear the symbol of the sect-*Trisula* or *Garuda*."—*Fergusson*, pp 54 and 347. The mention of pillars is found in early Bengali works.—See *Sunya Purān*, *Dharmasthān*, 20-21.

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(iv)	চূড়া	...	Spire.
(v)	বেদি	...	Altar.
(vi)	হোমশালা	...	Place for sacrificial fire.
(vii)	নাটশালা	...	Amusement-Hall (Theatre).
(viii)	বাগ্গঘর	...	Music-Hall.
(ix)	অতিথিশালা	...	Guest-house.
(x)	ভোগশালা	...	Shed for the cooking of offerings to the deity.
(xi)	স্তম্ভ	...	Pillar.
(xii)	নাছবাট	...	Path.
(xiii)	সুরোবর	...	Tank.
(xiv)	উদ্যান	...	Garden.
(xv)	প্রাচীর	...	Outer-wall.
(xvi)	দ্বার	...	Gate and door.

In Bhāratchandra's *Annadāmangal* the description of artificial birds and lotuses, etc., made for decorative purposes attracts our admiration. The location of the different compartments of a temple has been clearly indicated by Dwija Kamallochan.¹

Forts and Fortified Cities.

The Dharmamangal poems supply us with information regarding the knowledge of the Bengalee people about the construction of forts and citadels. These poems though full of exaggeration and poetic fancies contain an element of truth in them. The following description of the citadel of Maenagad from the Dharmamangal poems by Govindaram Banerjee may be cited by way of illustration :—

² “The Eastern gate was the principal one and made of stones. It was so high that the birds could not cross it. The stone gates

¹ Curiously enough the recently discovered ruined temple of Oniah in Egypt bears similarity with the Bengali temples.

See *Egypt and Israel* by Petrie, pp. 102-105.

² পাথরে নিৰ্মিত পূৰ্ণ প্রধান দ্বার ।
পক্ষী পার হতে পারে পৰ্ব্বত আকার ॥
পাথর কপাট পিপীড়ার নাহি পথ ।
দেখিয়া লক্ষীর হ'ল পূৰ্ণ মনোরথ ॥

had no openings even for an ant to pass, which excited the admiration of Lakshmi who worshipped them with offerings of flower and water and went to the northern gate. It was made of steel and fitted in a steel wall in such a way that when closed even the winds had no access through it. After worshipping this gate too, Lakshmi walked on to the western gate. This side of the fort was made of copper and so a copper-gate stood there. It was built in a way that it hardly had any opening even for a thread to pass. After duly finishing his worship here, Lakshmi visited the southern gate which was made of wood. The buildings on this side were all made of wood. The southern gate was also duly worshipped. It was constructed in such a way that there was no room even for the dust to enter."

Sitārām Dās, another author of Dharmamangal poems gives us some side light of the fortified cities of the olden days in his description of the defence of the city of Kamrup.

পুষ্প জল দিয়া পূৰ্ণ দ্বার বাচাইয়া ।
উত্তর দ্বারেতে লক্ষ্মী উত্তরিল গিয়া ॥
লোহার প্রাচীর দ্বারে লোহার কপাট ।
কেমনে আসিব সৈন্ত নাহি বায়ু বাট ॥
বাচায়া উত্তর দ্বারে দিয়া পুষ্পজল ।
পশ্চিম দ্বারে গেলা লক্ষ্মী পায়াদল ॥
অরুণ কিরণ ধরে তাম্র গড় খান ।
তাম্রের কপাট বিশ্বকর্ষার নিৰ্ম্মাণ ॥
স্বত্বর সঞ্চার নাঞি নিবিড় কপাট ।
লক্ষ্মী বলে কোন পথে প্রবেশিব ঠাট ॥
পুষ্পজল দিয়া দ্বার করিয়া পূজন ।
দক্ষিণ গড়ের দ্বারে দিল দরশন ॥
কাঠের কপাট দ্বারে অট্টালিকা গড় ।
দিল পুষ্পজল দ্বারে সামন্ত স্বকর ॥
ধলিবেণু প্রবেশ করিতে নাঞি তায় । * ইত্যাদি ।

গোবিন্দরাম বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়ের ধর্মমঙ্গল

The hero (Kālu) passed through the outermost gate which was one *yojana* in height, resembling a mountain. The defensive barrier which Kālu met was a trench or moat eighty-one cubits in width. Then he met a bush of canes, interspersed with 'keā' shrubs, extending over a space of sixty cubits. Around this was another trench, the very sight of which frightened away the enemy. Its depth was seven cubits and breadth fifty cubits, thus resembling a river of ordinary dimensions. In it there were crocodiles and 'Makaras' (fabulous dolphins) in large numbers. Kālu passed the seven defensive structures and finally reached the city.

Another description of the fortified city of Burdwan as given by Bhāratchandra in his *Annadāmangal* may be of interest in this connection. *

"There were seven fortifications surrounding the city of Burdwan. In the outermost compound resided the 'Kolāposhas,' *e. g.*, the English, the Dutch, the French, the Danes and other foreigners (all famous artillerymen) who came there for trade from distant countries. Within the next defensive walls there were Mahomedans

১ "প্রবেশ করিল বীর সমুখ দ্বার ।
যোজন প্রমাণ উচ্চ পর্বত আকার ॥
গড় দেখি সমুখে একালী হাত খাণ্ডা ।
মাড়ি পদ ঘোড়ার বলিতে নাক্রি দাণ্ডা ॥
তারপর বেতগড় ঘাট হাত খানা ।
কেআবনে দেখি কত পিব্যাসীর থানা ॥
গুয়া গড় গভীর দেখিয়া প্রাণ উড়ে ।
সাত হাত দরিয়া পঞ্চাশ হাত আড়ে ॥
লাখে লাখে কুন্তীর মকর অবতার ।
অইরূপ সাতগড় হয়্যা গেল পার ॥"

—দশরাজের গীত (সীতারাম দাস) ।

২ "প্রথম গড়েতে দেখে কোলাপোষের নিবাস ।
ইংরেজ ওলন্দাজ ফিরিস্তী ফরাস ॥
দিনেমার এলেমাল করে গোলন্দাজী ।
সফরিয়া নানাজব্বা আনয়ে জাহাজী ॥

of all denominations, *e. g.*, the Sayads, the Malliks, the Sheikhs, the Moghuls and the Pathans. Some of them were reading Turkish and Arabic with an admixture of Persian while others counted beads. Around the third fortification were the brave and warlike Kshatriyas, expert in the use of arms. Within the fourth enclosure lived the brave Rajput warriors who acted as guards of the King's palanquin, while within the fifth dwelt the Rāhuts (ambassadors) together with the Bhāt¹ Brahmans who were employed as ambassadors and envoys to foreign courts. Inside the sixth resided the Bundelas (Rajputs from Bundelkhand) who acted as keepers of the royal treasury which required the observance of strict vigilance. The millionaire merchants fixed that place as their abode. Thus visiting the six defences the prince of Kānchi entered the seventh or the innermost defence-walls."

দ্বিতীয় গড়েতে দেখে যত মুসলমান ।
সৈয়দ মল্লিক সেথ মোগল পাঠান ॥
তুরকী আরবী গড়ে ফারসী মিশালে ।
ইলি মিলি জপে সদা ছিলিমিলি মাগে ॥
তৃতীয় গড়েতে দেখে ক্ষত্রিয় সকল ।
অস্ত্র শস্ত্রে বিশারদ সমরে অটল ॥
চতুর্থ গড়েতে দেখে যত রাজপুত ।
রাজার পালঙ্ক রাখে যুদ্ধে মজবুত ॥
পঞ্চম গড়েতে দেখে যতক রাহুত ।
ভাট বৈসে তার কাছে বাতায়াতে দূত ॥
ষষ্ঠ গড়ে দেখে যত বৌদেলার থানা ।
আঁটআঁটি সেই ঘরে থাকে মালখানা ॥
সেই গড়ে নানাজাতি বৈসে মহাজন ।
লক্ষ কোটি পয় শব্দে সংখ্যা করে ধন ॥

* * *

এইরূপে ছয় গড় সকল দেখিয়া ।
প্রবেশে ভিতর গড় অভয়া ভাবিয়া " ॥ ইত্যাদি ।

—ভারতচন্দ্রের অন্নদামঙ্গল (পৃ: ২৬০—২৬১)

¹ About the institution of Bhāts see Indo-Aryans, Vol. II, p. 293.

The peculiar notion of the Bengali poets that a fortified city should have seven defensive enclosures might be based on facts. About the number of defensive fortifications they curiously enough stuck to the mystic number of seven. The idea that a defensive battlement should be surrounded by bushes and prickly shrubs remind us of the similar contrivances adopted by the Africans for defensive fencing-works in which these bushes are still employed and are known as the 'Zariba.'¹ In the late Madhist war in Africa this kind of fencing was much resorted to by the Egyptian army for protection against the Madhist incursions. We are not quite aware of any particular case of a fortified city in Bengal exactly as described by the poets, but the extensive ruins of Rampal (in East Bengal—the last capital of the Senas), Gauṛ, Dhekur and Maynāgaḍ suggest the existence of such things.

The custom of worshipping the gates of a fort bears strange similarity with the worshipping of the ships on the eve of a sea-voyage. The extraordinary height and thickness of the walls of a fortified city,² though now may seem a myth, might not be

¹ About a Zariba at Bir Gowi in Darfur—Slatin Pasha described as follows :—

The station at Bir Gowi "was surrounded by a square Zariba, each side of which measured about one hundred and eighty paces, and consisted of a thorn barricade about twelve feet thick and six feet high; on the inside the ground was raised to enable the men to fire over it from a platform, and the whole was surrounded by a ditch nine feet wide, and about nine feet deep."—*Fire and Sword in the Sudan*, by Slatin Pasha, p. 67.

² Traces of very thick and massive wall have been recently discovered in recent excavations at Tell-el-Yehudiyeh about twenty miles north of Cairo, which bears striking similarity with the description of our poets and show that bigness was perhaps the fashion in the ancient world (*cf.* the great wall of China). That walls of stupendous nature might be built with brick is really wonderful. Bengal was perhaps not behindhand in this respect from Assyria and Egypt. The following lines are quoted about the fortification of Tell-el-Yehudiyeh (surrounding the old Oniah temple) from Petrie :

"Working over from the eastern side of the hill first blocks of brick-work were met with, sunk in the ground, which had formed the foundation of a massive fortification wall along the edge of the platform. Next a few bricks and scraps of wall and further on stood the base of the opposite wall of a court. Then at the north end was a thick foundation, part of the outer wall and across the court was another narrow foundation dividing it in two, forming an outer and inner court. At the south end of this was a very massive pile of brick foundation, 55 feet long and 17 feet wide, all of solid brickwork, excepting a narrow groove of the axis... ..

quite so, as the instances of the forts at Bharatpur (C. I.) and Gwalior may be cited in this connection. The ruins of the Mahomedan forts at Dacca and Egāra Sindur show the stupendous structure of Indian forts. The moats of the medieval fortresses of Europe with the draw-bridge and portcullis bear some resemblance to the defensive structures of ancient India and so of ancient Bengal.

The principle of town-planning followed the time-honoured customs and the Sāstras, modified according to the taste of the Mahomedans in later days when the latter were the rulers of the country. Each guild generally occupied one part of a town. Moreover, a capital city, possessed concentric circles of defences and walls as the deserted places at Delhi, Agra and other would signify. Bernier described in clear terms the arrangement of defences of a Moghul city which was sometimes nothing but a moving camp. Bengal being an important part of the Moghul Empire surely adopted the practice. The description of Burdwan by Bhāratchandra in the celebrated Annadāmangal and the concentric walls and residences was perhaps an exact representation of a Mahomedan city wherein people lived near or apart according to their connection with the existing government. Similar was the condition of Pekin city under the Emperors. In this city around the Imperial quarters lived the Mandarins or government officials and the Manchus (people of the same nationality as the Emperors). The Chinese lived somewhat apart—outside the walls. The foreigners including the foreign legations lived at the outermost part of the city. Such a system is still partly in vogue in China.

The following description of a town by Dwij Abhirām will give an idea of a Hindu town.¹

The large square building thus marked out, over 70 feet by 50 feet, is on the highest part of the mound and completely dominated the temple courts; the west face of the great mound, the northern tower, and both of the approaches. It must have been the castle or citadel. Of the great stairway from the plain there remain two thick walls of brick, still eleven feet high, although the upper part and all the stairs have been destroyed. The walls were nearly four feet thick and between them the space is filled with over six feet of gravel and sand, to form a basis for steps," etc., etc. *Egypt and Israel*, by Petrie, pp. 102-104.

¹ In the Sanskrit work Arthasāstra by Kautilya, description of houses and town-building are to be found. The Yātaka stories (1st 227 and 346, 4th 378, 5th 5

"The Pāndavas saw with wondering eyes the beauty of the city of Manipur, where all were followers of Srikrishna. The houses were built on all sides of the town. They were tinged with the paint of 'Hingul' and 'Haritāl.' The roofs were decorated with flowers. There were exquisite cane-works on the roofs adorned with peacock-feathers. The spires were made of gold and jewellery and contained white flags. There were

and 6th 577) adds much to our knowledge of house-building in ancient India including Bengal. See also an article 'Artha-Sāstrō-Samājchitra' by N. Banerjee in the Sāhitya Parishat Patrikā.

হৃদয় পরম সুখে আশি অণিমিথে দেখে
 মনিপুর অতি সুমোহন ।
 অমুপম পুরী শোভা . জগজন-মনোলোভা
 সবে তথি কৃষ্ণ পরায়ণ ॥
 বিচিত্র নির্মাণ ঘর চারিপাশে ধরে ধর
 বিচিত্র হিঙ্গুল হরিতালে ।
 অমুপম পুরী শোভা জগজন মনোলোভা
 কুম্বরচিত চারু চালে ॥
 বান্ধে সুরঙ্গীনবেত আচ্ছাদি বসন নেত
 শিখিগুচ্ছ সুমোহন সাজে ।
 মণিমুকুতার ঝারা উপরে কনক বারা
 তথি বেত পতাকা বিরাজে ॥
 গৃহে গৃহে সুনিকট বিচিত্র দেউল মঠ
 কেন্দ্রী বৈগু শূঙ্গ নানাজাতি ।
 ধূপদীপ উপহারে কৃষ্ণ আরাধন করে
 কি পুরুষ কিবা নারী তথি ॥
 দেখি মণিপুরময় গৃহে গৃহে দেবালয়
 বিচিত্র চৌখণ্ডি শাস্ত্রশালা ।
 সতে রূপ গুণময় অঙ্গে আভরণচয়
 শত শত শিশু করে খেলা ॥ ইত্যাদি

—বিজ্ঞ অভিরাণের মহাভারত ।

temples attached to every house and 'Maths' everywhere.....The people were all devout worshippers of Sree Krishna. Every house possessed a hall set apart for the discussions of the Sāstras. These were very artistically made. The following description though containing exaggerations might bear some truth showing the idea entertained by Bengali poets about ancient cities.

"The houses were built of glass or crystal with the 'Jhārā,' or vases, bedecked with pearls, with golden flags fluttering above. The roofs too were made of crystal. There were tall trees of various species in the city with stone-pavements round their base. At every door of the houses there were betel-nut and cocoa-nut trees (auspicious signs). The houses at Mathurā (capital of Kangsa) were of various colours resembling, as it were, the paradise of Indra." 1

The city of Burdwan 2 as described by Bhāratchandra furnishes us with an accurate picture of a Hindu city, modelled after the Islamic style.

১ ফটিকের ঘর সব মুকুতার ঝারা ।
নেতের পতাকা উড়ে স্বর্ণের ধারা ॥
স্বধাকর নির্মিত ঘর ফটিকের চাল ।
বিচিত্র বিচিত্র বৃক্ষ দেখিতে বিশাল ॥
নানাবৃক্ষ দেখে সব বাধান পাথরে ।
গুয়া নারিকেল শোভে ছায়ায় ছায়ায় ॥
নানাবর্ণে বিচিত্র কংসের মধুপুরী ।
স্বর্ণে শোভা করে বেন ইন্দ্রের নগরী ॥

—ভাগবত (মালাধর বসু) ।

২ চলে রায় পাছু করি কোটালের থানা ।
দেখে জাতি ছত্রিশ ছত্রিশ কারখানা ॥
চৌদিগে সহর মাঝে মহল রাজার ।
আট আট বোল গলি ছত্রিশ বাজার ॥
থামে বাক্স মস্ত হাতি তলকে তলকে ।
তড় নাড়ে মদ ঝারে ঝলকে ঝলকে ॥

"The prince of Kānchi left the Police station and inspected the various quarters of the city. He saw the workshops of the thirty-six subcastes of the Hindus. The royal residence stood at the centre of the city, all other houses clustering around it. There were sixteen lanes and thirty-six bazars. A large number of elephants were tied down to pillars in batches, and were emitting ichor and moving the trunks to and fro. The horses imported from various countries such as Iraq, Turkey, Arabia and countries over-seas were all tied to the pillars, in their thousands. Who can count the number of camels, asses and the mules? Such was also the case with birds. Domestic animals and birds of all descriptions were kept in this city. Temples were to be seen in every house and the sound of conch-shells and bells heard, and the worship of the God Siva,

ইরাকী তুরাকী তাজী আরবী জাহাজী ।
 হাজার হাজার দেখে থামে বান্ধা বাজী ॥
 উট গাধা খচর গনিতে কেবা পারে ।
 পালিয়াছে পশু পক্ষী যে আছে সংসারে ॥
 • • • • •
 ঘরে ঘরে দেবালয় শঙ্খঘণ্টারব ।
 শিবপূজা চণ্ডীপাঠ বজ্র মহোৎসব ॥
 • • • • •
 দেখিয়া নগর শোভা বাথানে সুন্দর ।
 সম্মুখে দেখেন সরোবর মনোহর ॥
 শানে বান্ধা চারি ঘাট শিবালায় চারি ।
 অবধূত জটায়ুস্বামী সারি সারি ॥
 চারি পাড়ে সুচারু পুষ্পের উপবন ।
 গন্ধ লয়ে মন্দ বহে মলয় পবন ॥
 টল টল করে জল মন্দ মন্দ বয় ।
 নানা জলচর পক্ষী খেলিয়া বেড়ায় ॥
 খেত রক্ত নীল পীত শত শতজুদ ।
 ফুটে পদ্ম কুমুদ কল্লার কোকনদ ॥

—ভারতচন্দ্রের অন্নদামঙ্গল (পৃঃ, ২৬২-২৬৪) ।

recitations of the descriptions about the exploits of the goddess Chandi, sacrifices, and Mahotsavas (the Vaisnava religious feasts) were performed. The prince now saw a fine tank before him, the four ghats of which were constructed with lime-stone. By the side of each of these ghats was to be seen a temple (dedicated to Siva) crowded by a great number of Saiva ascetics, conspicuous for their matted locks, and bodies covered with ashes. There were flower-gardens all around the tank. The fragrance of flowers was carried in all directions by the southern wind (*lit.* the wind coming from the Malayas). The water of the tank looked transparently clear with a large number of aquatic birds floating on the surface. The lotuses of all colours, such as white, red, blue and yellow, adorned the tank.¹ The grandeur of the city struck the prince."

The following were the divisions of a city in ancient days (specially a capital city) which deserve special notice :—

(i)	কারখানা	...	Workshops (owned by various castes).
(ii)	চক	...	The chowk-bazar or the Central Market-place.
(iii)	কোতরাগী চবুতারা		The Police Station.
(iv)	সরোবর	...	Tanks.
(v)	শিবালয়	...	Temples (dedicated to god Siva).
(vi)	কাটক	...	Prison-house.
(vii)	রাজার মহল	...	Royal palace.
(viii)	মাগধানা	...	Treasury or Strongroom.
(ix)	রাজপুতের গড়	...	Fortified barracks for the Rajput bodyguards of the King.
(x)	বাহতের গড়	...	Legations.
(xi)	মহলা	...	Separate residential houses for the various castes and professions.

These exist even to this day in many of the towns of India. Dwija Abhirām, Mukundarām and particularly Bhāratchandra

¹ Much care was taken for the excavation of tanks in old days. The following description of tanks by Hiuen Tsang left by him on his visit to the great University of Nalanda may not be out of place here.

"All around pools of translucent water shone with the open petals of the blue lotus-flowers; then and there the lovely kanaka-trees hung down their deep red blossoms and woods of dark mango-trees spread their shade between them." Indian Sculpture and Painting, by E. B. Havell, p. 106.

described at length the main divisions of a city very much on the same lines.

The royal palace¹ contained nine gates, the court-apartments for guards and treasury and inner apartments. From the eleventh century downwards we get almost the same picture of a Hindu court except in so far as it was modified after the Mahomedan style in the later days. The court-house was perhaps situated inside the palace and possessed nine gates, the city itself having seven defensive walls and gates as we see in Bhāratchandra's Annadāmangal. The royal palace was probably a small town in itself inside the bigger area of the city, like the Kremlin of Moscow. The court-room was a big hall with rows of pillars supporting the roof. The 'Ārajbegi,' an officer in charge of petitions (addressed by people to the king) usually took his stand by the side of a pillar. In Bhāratchandra's Annadāmangal we find that horses and elephants were tied to the pillars. From what remote period of time such a custom had been prevailing in this country is not known, but it may be said, that it was considered as enhancing the grandeur of royalty in the days of Islamic rule. Of what type these pillars were we do not know, but they might resemble those favoured by the Jains for serving the purpose of lamp-stands.

Adjacent to the royal palace was located the royal treasury. It was perhaps very strongly built as the description of Bhāratchandra shows.

The Chowk-bazar or the Chādni-chowk (the market-place of the city) was usually located close to the royal palace and built in accordance with the Islamic practice.

The 'Bālākhānā' or a two-storied house formed a part of the royal residence and was perhaps used by the inmates of the royal house to watch the people on special occasions.

The 'Nahabat' or a small room for the musicians was always an important adjunct to the royal palace in the days of the Islamic rule. The rich also possessed it as they do now.

The Kotowali or the office of the prefect of police with the jail attached to it deserves mention. The jail was known as the

¹ See Bhārati Chandra's Annadāmangal, Maenāmati Songs, Yayanārāyana's Harililā and Krittivās's Autobiographical Accounts.

Kutghar or 'Bandi-ghar' and was generally an underground cell, similar to what is known to have been existing in Europe in the 18th century and so vividly described in the celebrated work 'The Count of Monte Cristo.' The Dharma songs, the Chandi-Kāvya and the Mymensingh ballads (recently brought to light by Dr. Sen of the Calcutta University) give elaborate description of the prison-houses of old.

The prison-house has been thus described by Narasingha Vāsu in his Dharma songs, in connection with the imprisonment of Lāusen.¹ "Lausen was arrested and taken to the prison by order of the minister. Shackles were put on his hands and chains round his neck and a heavy stone was placed on his breast. His feet were also bound in a chain known as the Dārūkā and the rim of a broken pot was made to hang round his neck. His matted hair was again tied by a rope by means of which he was suspended from the roof of the cell. The smoke issuing from the burning husk below nearly suffocated the prince Lausen. Besides two sets of sharp razors were arranged on the two sides of the prisoner so as to cut his person at the slightest movement."

This system of punishment bears strange resemblance to that obtaining in Europe, especially in England, during the reign of

লাউসেনে বন্দীশালে নিল পোতা মাজী ।
পাত্ৰ বলে বেটাকে দিলাম ভাল মাজী ॥
হাতে হাতকড়ি দিল গলায় শিকল ।
বুকে তুল্যা দিলেক পাথর জগদল ॥
ডাড়ুকা দিলেক পায় যেন দশ মণ ।
গলায় দিলেক হাড়ী সংশয় জীবন ॥
জটে দড়ি দিয়া টাঙ্গে চালের বাতায় ।
উমা মূরি খাল্য যেন তুঘের ধুলায় ॥
খরশান কুর সব রাখে দুই পাশে ।
লড়িতে চড়িতে মাংস কাটে অনায়াসে ॥

—নরসিং বহুর ধর্মরাজের গীত ।

The building of a prison-house with sharp razors fitted on to the walls, is curious indeed.

Stephen. The use of a pot round the neck of a criminal, as described above, reminds one of the system of pillory as existed in Europe and the use of a heavy stone was perhaps peculiar to this country.

Every Hindu capital contained an execution ground or 'Mashān' as it was called, a type of which existed in Cooch Behar till the other day. A temple of Kālī always formed a part of the execution place. A metal-pointed bamboo-pole known as the 'Sool,' was kept there for impalement. In Bhāratchandra's Vidyāsundar and Dharma-songs are to be found descriptions of an execution ground.

Ordinary houses may be divided into two classes, namely, those belonging to the rich and those belonging to the poor. The description of a rich man's house given by Mālādhār Vasu, as mentioned previously, helps us to form an idea of the same.

The following parts of a residential house attract our notice :—

(i)	চাল	...	...	Roof.
(ii)	কণকধারা (ঝারা)	...	...	A golden vase set at the top of a house.
(iii)	ঝাঙা	...	...	Flagstaff.
(iv)	বেড়া	...	...	Walls.
(v)	খুঁটি	...	...	Poles or posts.

The following were the parts of a curvilinear roof made of bamboos, reeds and other materials.

(i)	সারক	...	...	Bamboo-poles placed horizontally over the frame-work. ¹
(ii)	ঝরা	...	...	Split bamboo placed in close-array across the 'Sāraks' of a roof.
(iii)	টুয়া	...	...	The top of a curvilinear roof.
(iv)	পাইর	...	...	The bamboo pieces joining the frame-work of posts supporting the roof.
(r)	পাতি	...	...	Bamboo pieces or metallic sheets to protect the angles of the four walls. ²

¹ See Chandikāvya by Kamal Lochan.

² See Manasāmangal by Vijaya Gupta. The terms are still in use in East Bengal, specially in the District of Mymensingh.

Houses whether belonging to the rich or to the poor, were generally made of thatch and bamboo. The quality of a house used to be judged by the workmanship displayed and not by the materials used. The use of canes for building purposes was remarkable. In many cases canes were coloured and artistically formed into pictorial representations. These are to be seen even to this day in East Bengal where mud-walls are scarcely to be found. In the *Chandikāvya* by Kavikankan we find the roof of the vessel of merchant Sreemanta, Dhanapati's son, built artistically with canes. In the Mymensingh ballads we find animated descriptions of houses exhibiting all the workmanship and peculiarities of house-building (not excepting the cane-work). The use of peacock feathers for adorning a house as described in the Dwij Abhirām's *Mabābhārat* and in the Mymensingh Ballads¹ seems novel. The doorways² (*Bāra-Duāri*, *lit.* containing twelve doors) as mentioned in these ballads is indeed peculiar. A room possessing no less than twelve doors is not to be found now-a-days. The roofs of a big house were composed, as they are composed now, of four or eight frames. The houses were divided into a number of apartments. The house of a rich man would usually consist of five apartments.

It is not true, as stated before, that the Bengalis did not use stone as building material.³ Stone pillars have recently been unearthed from various places of Bengal, shewing admirable architectural workmanship. But stone was used as building-material only by the rich, the *Rājās* and *Rāj-chakravartis* of old. Ordinarily the people of Bengal, specially of Eastern Bengal where the rivers

¹ See the story of *Malua* and other stories of the Mymensingh Ballads (Bengali Version, pp. 7, 8, 15, 18, 19, 27, 62, 114 and 221, ed. by D. C. Sen) for an elaborate description of Bengali houses of old.

² Cf. the *Bāra-Duāri* (a pucca building with twelve doors) of Niamutullah of Goud. See the following lines in *Gauder Itihāsh* by R. Chakravarti, Vol. II, p. 16 :

“নিম্নমতউল্লার বারদুয়ারী চতুর্কোণ দালান । এই দালানে বারটী দরজা আছে । ইহা প্রত্যেক দিকে ৪২ ফুট প্রশস্ত । মধ্য প্রকোষ্ঠ ২১½ ফুট বর্গ । চারিখান প্রস্তর ফলকে কোরাণের বচন উৎকীর্ণ আছে ।”

³ That the Bengalis did actually possess such buildings has been admitted by Fergusson in a passing way in his work, *Ancient and Eastern Architecture*, as referred to previously.

are so treacherous, used to construct straw-buildings and the whole art of the Bengali architects was employed in beautifying the roofs and walls with workmanship of high aesthetic order, using fine canes, wrought into designs of a great variety.

If it is true that other parts of the world imitated the style of curvilinear roofing from Bengal,¹ as stated by Fergusson, then surely this Bengali style has been adopted by the Dravidian people in Southern India as we find in the stone-built 'Raths.' Thus writes Fergusson:—

".....The oldest and most interesting group of these monuments are the so-called five 'Raths' or monolithic temples standing on the sea-shore to the south of the other rock excavations. One of these, having an apsidal termination, appear in the centre of the preceding woodcut (No. 185) and little detached from the rest. The other four standing in a line running from north-east to south-west looked as if they had been curyed out of a single stone or rock, which originally, if that were so, must have been between 35 ft. and 40 ft. high at its southern end, sinking to half that height at its northern extremity, and its width diminishing in like proportion. The first on the north is the Draupadi's Rath—a mere pancala or cell 11 ft. square externally, and with a curvilinear roof rising to about 18 ft. high (Woodcut No. 186). Apparently it was once crowned by a finial of some sort, but its form cannot now be ascertained. This Rath is the most completely finished of the five and is now unique of its kind but must have belonged to an extensive class of buildings when it was executed, and their form consequently becoming important in the history of the style. The cell inside measured 6 ft. 6 in. depth by 4 ft. 6 in. across, on the back wall of which is a four-armed sakti or female divinity, probably Lakshmi, with some attendants: the Dwārpālas also are females, as are the figures on the north, east and south sides."² There are also other Raths such as those of Arjun, Bhima and others.³

¹ A brick-built house with curvilinear roofing still exists at Madhupur in the District of Mymensingh.

² See *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture*, by Fergusson, pp. 329-331.

³ See also among other works *Cave Temples of India* (Fergusson and Burgess), p. 116, and *Bengali Temples and their General Characteristics*, J.A.S.B. 1909, p. 147.

• See also an article "বঙ্গীয় স্থাপত্যের ইতিহাস" by Nanigopal Mazumdar, read in the eighth sitting of Bangiya-Sahitya-Sammilan at Burdwan, 1321 (B.S.).

A few words more from Fergusson may not be out of place here: In course of his remarks on the Bengali architecture, he says :—

“ The city of Goudj was a famous capital of the Hindus long before it was taken possession of by the Mahomedans. The Sen and the Pala dynasties of Bengal seem to have resided here, and no doubt adorned it with temples and edifices worthy of their fame and wealth. These, however, were probably principally in brick, though adorned with pillars and details in what used to be called black marble but seems to be an indurated pot stone of very fine grain, and which takes a beautiful polish. Many fragments of Hindu art in this material are found among the ruins ; and if carefully examined might enable us to restore the style. Its interest, however, principally lies in the influence it had on the Mahomedan style that succeeded it. It is neither like that of Delhi, nor Jaunpur, nor any other style, but one purely local, and not without considerable merit in itself ; its principal characteristic being heavy short pillars of stone supporting pointed arches and vaults in brick—whereas at Jaunpur, for instance, light pillars carried horizontal architraves and flat ceilings. The general character of the style will be seen in the example from a mosque, called Qadam-i-Rasul at the south-east gate of the fort at Goudj, and is by no means devoid of architectural spirit. Ba'a Sonā Masjid, outside the fort to the north-east, is perhaps the finest memorial now left at Goudj. Built by Nasarat Shah in 1526, it is 168 feet in length by 76 feet outside, with walls 8 feet thick and faced inside and out with hornblende. It has eleven arched entrances in front, each 5 feet 11 inches wide, and 14 feet high. These enter the front corridor, the arches of which support the eleven domes of the roof. Beyond this is the masjid proper, of which the roof has all fallen ; it had three longitudinal aisles supported by twenty pillars ; and there were eleven mihrabs in the wall. At both sides of the doorways at the end of the corridor, and at the back corners were polygonal minarets of brown basalt, six in all, but their heads are now ruined. From its massive solidity and size this is an imposing building ; indeed this characteristic of the Goudj architecture forms a striking contrast to the lighter arcades of much of the Saracenic style.... One of the most interesting of the antiquities of the place is a minar standing just outside the fort to the east. For two-thirds

of the height it is a polygon of twelve sides ; above that circular, till it attains the height of 84 ft. The door is at some distance from the ground, and altogether, it looks more like an Irish round-tower than any other example known, though it is most improbable that there should be any connection between the two forms...It is perhaps a pillar of victory a *jay-stambha*, such as the Kutb-Minar at Delhi.”¹

Several types of peculiar houses, mentioned in the old Bengali literature, are noticed below :—

Garden-house.

The prevailing custom of building a garden-house with separate areas reserved for fruit trees, flower-plants and medicinal herbs is found in the *Manasāmangal* poems by Bansidās.² From his description we find that the garden-house used to be constructed in the northern side of the area, allotted for the residential purposes. Tanks were dug and cocoanut trees were planted around it. Among other kinds of fencing, we find mention of the use of ‘Mandār’—a kind of prickly plants. Growing of banana plants, as described in the poem, is a practice prevalent in the country-side down to the present times.

The description of a steel-house and an elaborate account of its construction as found in the *Manasāmangal* poems deserve some notice. It is described thus:—

“Chānd called in fourteen hundred workmen to his presence to build a steel-house. The architect who was chief of them—was Tārāpati. He was a man of versatile genius and possessed large hands and long rough hair. He had in his right hand a hammer and in his left hand a balance. His hair was yellow and his waist was bent. His nose, eyes and the whole face were black as soot. The house to be built was made of steel and should possess only one door.....Meditating the name of Viswakarmā, the architects built at the outset a number of workshops. The ‘gābars’ and the ‘Pāiks’ were engaged in thousands to carry coal in sacks from the store-house to the workshop. Pig-iron, in large quantity, was collected in piles resembling

¹ See History of Indian and Eastern Architecture, by Fergusson, pp. 253-259.

² See the *Manasāmangal* poems by Bansidās, pp. 212-213.

so many hillocks. Then the iron was put into the fire. When it became red-hot by constantly blowing the forge, it was moulded as desired by means of repeated hammering from the sinewy hands. There was great din and bustle in the workshops. Some fashioned plinth, some iron posts, some doors and some bolts. The expert architect, Tārāpati, managed his work very creditably and made the measurement of the steel-house which was nine yards in length and seven yards in breadth. Then he fixed the posts on earth and began the roof-work by standing on these posts. After finishing the structure of the roof he took in hand the 'ruās' which he fixed on it, and then completed the top of the roof which he built very strongly. Then Tārāpati descended from the roof and attached the four steel walls on the four sides of the house. The architect kept only one door at one side. It was made also so carefully that even there, there was scarcely any room left, when closed, for free ventilation." ¹

¹ (চাঁদ সদাগরের গুয়া বাড়ী নির্মাণ)

গোহার বাসর নির্মাণ ।

* * *

বিপরীত কর্ম করিতে চাঁদ ভাল জানে ।
চৌদ্দ শত কর্মকার ডাক দিয়া আনে ॥
তারাপতি কর্মকার সকলের প্রধান ।
অধিক গুণ তাহার জানে সর্বকাম ॥
দীর্ঘ দীর্ঘ হাত পা মাথার ঝাটা চুল ।
ডান হাতে হাতুর বাম হাতেতে তুল ॥
পিঙ্গল মাথার চুল বেকা কাকালি ।
নাকে মুখে চকুতে লাগিয়াছে কাগী ॥

* * *

হুন্দর গোহার ঘর তাহে ঘাট পাট ।
একভিতে দ্বার খুইয়া লাগাও কপাট ॥
কুলুপ কপাট চাপিয় এক ভায় ।
বায়ু না শঙ্করে যেন পিপীড়া না বায় ॥

* * *

The construction of a steel-house as described here bears some resemblance to the corrugated iron sheds of to-day. It cannot be said with certainty if these steel-houses were really corrugated iron-houses. The excellence of the construction-work described by the poet and the general appearance of the architect himself rightly suggests the foreign pedigree of such a man. He might be a Chinese workman. The Chinese carpenters are noted for their joinery and are largely employed in Bengal even now in construction-works both by Government and by private firms. The description of iron-melting and mouldering in

আবাসের বাহিরে আছে ঠাণ্ডা স্বতন্ত্র ।

সেইখানে গড় গিয়া গোহার বাসর ॥

* * * *

সকল কামার মিলি করিলেক ধ্যান ।

বিশ্বকর্মা ন্মরি সন্ডে পাতিল দোকান ॥

গাবর পাইক লইয়া জায় হাজার হাজার ।

ভাণ্ডার হইতে লোহা নেয় গোলাব অঙ্গার ॥

বিদায় লইয়া কৰ্ম্মকার চলে আথে বাথে ।

ঘরের স্থানে ভাও গিয়া করে ভাল মতে ॥

সকল পাইক লইয়া একত্র করিল মেলা ।

ভাণ্ডার হইতে আসে লোহা অঙ্গারের ছালা ॥

পৰ্ব্বত প্রমাণ লোহা খুইল রাশি রাশি ।

দোকানের অগ্নি দেখি বড় ভয় বাসি ॥

কেহ লোহা পোড়া দেয় কেহ তার হাতি ।

আগুনে পুড়িয়া লোহা করিলেক পাতি ॥

অগ্নি হেন অলে লোহা দেখি লাগে ভয় ।

প্রভাত কালেতে যেন সূর্য্যের উদয় ॥

অতি তপ্ত হৈল লোহা অগ্নির সমান ।

দোহাতিয়া বাড়ী দিয়া করে খান খান ॥

লোহা তাঁতাইয়া কামারগণ করে গওগোল ।

কেহ বলে তাঁতা কেহ বলে তোলা ॥

একেবারে কামারগণ করে হুড়াহুড়ি ।

কামারের বোল চাল হাতুনের বাড়ী ॥

workshops shows on what stupendous a scale these were carried on and how skilful the workmen were, unlike the blacksmiths of the present day.

Tangi-ghar.

The 'Tangi-ghar' or the tower-house was a very peculiar kind of house, built in a lake. A house akin to a 'Tangi-ghar' may yet be

অতি শীঘ্র অগ্নি জলে গায়ে পড়ে ঘাম ।
 কেহ গড়ে লোহার ভিটি কেহ গড়ে খাম ॥
 হাজারে হাজারে কামার করে কিলকিল ।
 কেহ গড়ে কপাট কেহ গড়ে খিল ॥
 তারাপাতি কর্মকার চাতুরী ভাল জানে ।
 বাছিয়া বাছিয়া কামার লইল জনে জনে ॥
 বিশ্বকর্মা স্মরিয়া স্মরিল দেবী আই ।
 বিটার বেকা ভাঙ্গিয়া যুথিল ঠাঞি ঠাঞি ॥
 আড়ে সাত গজ নয় গজ দীর্ঘে ।
 প্রমাণ করিল ঘর নয় গজ উভে ॥
 ঝাটিতে সারিয়া কামার করে ঘরা ।
 খুটির উপর চড়িয়া ঘর করে সারা ॥
 চাল গড়ি তারাপাতি হাতে লৈল রয়া ।
 কসিয়া বান্ধিয়া দড় করে টুয়া ॥
 ঘর বান্ধিয়া কামার নামিল ভূমিত ।
 চারিখানা লোহার বেড়া দিল চারি ভিত ॥
 আগাগোড়া ষোড়াইয়া বাসরে দিল ভাও ।
 পিপীড়ার সকার নাই না সকারে বাও ॥
 চাঁদর কার্যে কর্মকারের মনে আশা অতি ।
 কোণে কোণে মিলাইয়া দিল লোহার পাতি ॥
 ঘর নির্মাইয়া তারা ঘরে গেল ঝাট ।
 একভিতে দ্বার খুইয়া লাগাল কপাট ॥
 বাহির দিয়া তবে সর্বলোকে চাই ।
 থাকুক অন্তের কাম বায়ু গতি নাই ॥

—বিজয় গুপ্তের মনসামঙ্গল

seen still existing in a lake at Chhindwara, a district-town in the Central Provinces. We learn from the Mahābhārata that Duryodhana hid himself in a lake which means perhaps that he took shelter in such a house. In Gorakshavijay is found mention of a tower-house, which was the abode of Hara, the great god and Gauri, his divine consort.¹ A kind of house quite different in construction but similar in name is still known as the *Tong* (tower-house). The *Tong* is still built by the Garos and other aboriginal tribes in the jungly tracts and hills of Assam and Bengal at a considerable height. The house rests on the tops of stout wooden posts. A ladder is kept to facilitate ascent and descent. Similar houses were built in different parts of India by the villagers for protection against raids by the marauding hordes of the Marhattas and Pindaries². These were partly used as watch-towers.

The dwellings of the poor were generally composed of thatched houses. The walls were either mattings or of mud. The mats were chiefly made of bamboo. The poor sometimes could not afford a better wood than that of the Castor-oil plant. The description of a poverty-stricken house is found in Kavikankan. Thus we find,

“Fullarā sat by the side of the goddess Chandi (in incognito) and related her sorrows of poverty. The hut had the shed of palm-leaves and posts of Castor-oil plant which break down at each gust of wind in the first part of Summer (mid-April to mid-May).”³

The house of the poor sometimes contained cavities on the ‘Kutcha’ floor which served the purpose of cups. Thus we find in Kavikankan, the fowler-woman Fullarā saying in distress:—

¹ See Gorakshavijay, Minchetan and Kavikankan Chandi.

² cf. Also similar houses in Hill Stations of A. B. Ry., E. B. Ry., and Forest offices.

৩ বসিয়া চণ্ডীর পাশে কহে দুঃখ-বাণী ।
ভাঙ্গা কুড়ে ঘর তাল পাতার ছাউনি ॥
ভেরেণ্ডার খুঁটা তার আছে মধ্য ঘরে ।
প্রথম বৈশাখ মাসে নিত্য ভাঙ্গে ঝড়ে ॥

—কবিকঙ্কণের চণ্ডীকাব্য ।

¹ "You will be sorry to hear of our sad plight. We take 'Āmāni' (a kind of acid soup) from these cavities on the floor, for want of cups."

The method of house-building has been very graphically described in the aphorisms of Khanā. Thus we gather from them that² a house should be built in such a way that there may be a tank on the east side, an orchard or garden on the north, bamboo-groves (essential for house-construction) on the west and an open space on the south. Such a fashion of house-building obviously grew out of sanitary considerations.

This rule has always been observed from time immemorial by the rich and the poor alike. The climatic peculiarities of a tropical country like Bengal necessitate the admission of ample air and light in each room and accordingly separate houses were built around a courtyard. Usually there are more apartments than one in a residence. The outer apartment of a man living in the country and possessing land invariably contains haystacks and cowsheds. The inner apartment always possesses a vegetable-yard and a place to husk paddy.

CHAPTER XI.

RELIGION.

I. Evidence of the Great Ethical Virtues in the Dharma Cult.

A century or so before the advent of Islam in Bengal, Buddhism had deteriorated into the Dharma cult, which as represented in the Sunya Purāṇ, shows some of the essential features of the Mahāyana creed shrouded in popular superstitions. In fact, in all the vernacular poems and folk-tales composed before the Brahmanic revival,

¹ তুঃখ কর অবধান, দুঃখ কর অবধান ।

আমানি খাবার গর্ত দেখ বিগ্ৰহমান ॥

—কবিকঙ্কণের চণ্ডীকাব্য ।

² পূবে হাঁস । পশ্চিমে বাশ ॥

উত্তরে বাগ । দক্ষিণে ফাঁক ॥

—খনার বচন ।

stress has been laid on acts, and not on 'devotion,' the characteristic of the latter-day Brahmanic School of faith. 'As you sow, so you reap,' with its corresponding emphasis upon action, was the doctrine that obtained among the Mahāyana Buddhists of the day. This canon of Work provides no place for the intervention of divine mercy, leaving, as it does, every human being to work out his own salvation. The early Bengali poems, prior to Brahmanic revival, record glorious examples of moral power, of abstinence and other sterner virtues of the soul, as opposed to the emotional felicities, extolled in the latter-day vernacular works.

In the folk-lore of Bengal, we come across numerous incidents, which serve to glorify human power. Let us, for instance, take the story of Mālanchamālā. Mālanchamālā uncomplainingly suffers all sorts of miseries sustained by her faith in the efficacy of her own actions.¹

Loyalty, hospitality, respect for pledges, truthfulness, abstinence and charity were the virtues, which in those days, carried favour with the people of Bengal, and devotional fervour—the characteristic of the Renaissance period—is scarcely noticeable in our earlier literature in an explicit form. Lāu Sen, Kālu Dom, Ranjāvatī, Lakshmi, Harihar Bāity and others are described in the Dharmamangal poems to have performed heroic deeds, actuated by the spirit of renunciation and inspired by great ethical virtues. Here again, stress has been laid upon action, as opposed to devotion. Underlying the mythological fable of Lāu Sen's making the sun rise in the West, there is fundamental doctrine of the Buddhist religion, *viz.*, that nothing is impossible for a resolute will to achieve. The following example from Mānik Ganguli's Dharmamangal poems lends support to this belief.²

¹ See D. R. Mazumdar's 'Thākur-mār Jhuli.'

² বাঙ্গালীকি বশিষ্ঠ ভৃগু ব্যাস আদি মুনি ।

পরশর পুণ্ড্র্য পুরাণে নাম শুনি ॥

কঠোর তপস্তা করে জরাজীর্ণ দেহ ।

*পশ্চিমে উদয় দিতে পারে নাই কেহ ॥

লাউসেন পশ্চিমে উদয় দিয়া এল ।

—মাণিক গাঙ্গুলীর ধর্মমঙ্গল ।

"We read in the Purānas about the great old sages Vālmiki, Vṛigu, Vyāsa, Parāśara, Pulastya and others passing through great austerities. The sages could not make the sun rise in the West,—a miracle, performed by Lāu Sen."

It was believed that all the powers including that of working miracles, attributed to the gods and Brahmins by the later Brahmanic school, could be achieved by any and every individual, to whatever caste he might belong, if only he passed through certain religious austerities the 'Tapasyā' and this was the belief that found expression in this legend of the sun rising in the West.

Harihar Bāity, a poor man, as we read in the Dharmamangal poems, sacrificed his life for speaking the truth. When he gave an evidence, before the emperor, about "the sun-rise in the West," of which, he said, he was an eye-witness, he knew it perfectly well that he was thereby incurring the displeasure of the minister, who would not believe in the truth of his assertion and might inflict on him any punishment that would please his capricious nature. But Harihar would, for no fear on earth, deviate from a path believed by him to be the right one. He frankly admitted before the king of Gauḍa that Lāu Sen had sacrificed his life to make the sun rise in the West, by virtue of a boon granted to him by the god Dharma after the former had gone through a severe course of austerities for three days, and the sun was actually made to rise in the West, though only for twelve 'dāṇḍas' (nearly five hours) ¹. And the price he had to pay for his love of truth and supreme fearlessness of consequences was indeed a dear one; it cost him his life. The villainous minister had him arrested soon after, on a false charge of theft and the fatuous king was made to pass on him the sentence of death by impalement. ²

¹ তিনদিন ছিল রায় হয়ে নব খণ্ড ।

তবে হৈল পশ্চিমে উদয় বার দণ্ড ॥

—ঘনরামের ধর্মমঙ্গল ।

² অবিচারে মহারাজ দিতে বলে শূলি ।

---ঘনরামের ধর্মমঙ্গল ।

Illustrations of such moral heroism can be cited in profusion from the literature of this period ; but they are hardly to be found in the literature of the Renaissance. The account of Lāu Sen's great abstinence and sexual purity gives us a glimpse into the spirit of this age.

When Nayāni, wife of Siva Bārni, approached Lāu Sen with her overtures of love, he proved too strong for her tempting solicitations. He said, ' "What shall I do with betels, cool sandal-paste and other articles of luxury that you are offering me ? I am an ascetic and hence I do not wish to enter the home of a worldly man for shelter. I have been practising austerities, from my boyhood in the name of the god 'Dharma.' On this Friday, I fast in his name. I shall break the fast on Saturday and then take my spare meal. A devotee of the god 'Dharma,' that I am, I do not care for wordly pleasures. Among us, the Vaisyas, it is not the custom to take meat or fish. I have never used oil to anoint my body. At night, we, two brothers, do not rest our heads beneath the roofs of any house ; we sleep under the Kadamba-tree."

Though the worship of Dharma, no doubt, implies a spirit of devotion, it is not purely spiritual, in the sense in which the Renais-

কি করিব পান গুয়া শীতল চন্দন ।
 গৃহস্থের বাড়ী আমি না যাই কখন ॥
 শিশুকাল হৈতে আমি ধর্মের তপস্বী ।
 শুক্রবার দিন মোর ধর্ম একাদশী ॥
 শনিবারে পারণাতে ভক্ষ্য ভোজ্য খাই ।
 ধর্মের সেবক হৈয়্যা স্বর্থ নাহি চাই ॥
 বৈশ্যবাসের কূলে নাই আমিও ভোজন ।
 ধর্ম বিনা অধর্ম আমি না করি কখন ॥
 আপনার জনমে কড় তৈল নাহি মাখি ।
 নিশি ঘোণে ছই ভাই কদম তলে থাকি ॥

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প্রবাসে কদম তলা রতন মন্দির ।

—রূপরামের ধর্মমঙ্গল ।

sance has taken it. The devotion of the followers of the Dharma-cult consists in self-sacrifice, abstinence and other virtues, and not in the mere recitation of the names of the Deity, which has been urged, inculcated and emphasised by the Brahmanic Revivalists, as possessing wonderful efficacy in hastening the spiritual advancement of the people.

Loyalty, especially that of a soldier, to the cause that he fights for, was considered to be one of the most important virtues,—characteristic of this period.

In the Dharma-mangal poems we find a fairly accurate picture of an ideal Hindu soldier. He is ever ready to sacrifice his life in the service of the king. Although he is not a moral propagandist still he will seldom speak an untruth or deviate from the path of virtue, for he believes, with all the intensity of a true believer, that if he fails in his duty, his failings would affect the king adversely. When Kālu was on the point of sacrificing his life, only to keep the word he had pledged to his brother Kāmbā, he said,¹ “You wicked man, you have put on the mask of a saint very successfully. You are a contemptible creature and I hate you with all my heart. My first impulse was to kill you on the spot, but I refrain from doing so, as I am resolved to keep my promise. If I prove false I shall not be the only sufferer for it in the world to come, but my master Lāu Sen, too, will, to a certain extent, incur the demerit of my transgression. This, indeed, is a matter of far greater concern to me. If I fail in my duty,

১ কালু বলে চণ্ডালে ধার্মিক বড় তুঁ ।
 দেখিতে উচিত নয় তোঝাড়ির মূঁ ॥
 কি করিব কোথা হতে পরকাল মজে ।
 এ পাপে পরশে পাছে সেন মহারাজে ॥
 এ পাপে না হয় পাছে পশ্চিমে উদয় ।
 সেনের কঠোর সেবা পাছে ব্যর্থ হয় ॥
 সত্য না লজ্জিহু আমি ইহার কারণ ।
 অতএব অধম তোর বাচিল জীবন ॥

—ঘনরামের দণ্ডমঙ্গল ।

the austerities of Lāu Sen will be of no avail, and the sun will never rise in the west.”¹

The following has been taken from the account of Kālu’s death, given in Ghanarām’s poems.

“Kālu tied his wife Lakhā tightly (so that she might not obstruct him in his self-destruction). He then turned to the east and made a promise to his brother Kāmbā that he would accede to his wishes. It was done very solemnly in the name of Dharma, by touching the holy water of the Ganges and Tulasi leaf.”² True to his promise, he then offered himself to be beheaded by his brother, in spite of his wife’s intercession ; and the relentless brother did not recoil from his projected fratricidal task.

“Lakhā, when she saw her husband killed, in her presence, instantly rode an elephant and attacked her husband’s assailant with great fury. She hurled a battle-axe against Kāmbā, which killed the villain at once, and recovered the dead body of her husband with the severed head.”³

This act of the widowed wife of Kālu testifies to the spirit of the age.

¹ Kāmbā, the wicked brother, had extorted a promise from Kālu, in a moment when the latter was affectionately disposed towards him, to this effect that he would give Kāmbā whatever he might seek from him. Kāmbā, who was all the while intriguing with the minister of Gaṇḍ to devise means for killing Kālu, demanded the latter’s head in fulfilment of his promise. Kālu, now fully convinced of his brother’s wicked machinations, offered his head in fulfilment of the pledge he had once given, though in an unguarded moment.

² লথেকে বান্ধিয়া দড় কালু সত্য করে ।

গঙ্গাজলে তুলসী তাহার তুলে ধরে ॥

পূর্বমুখে বলে কালু এই ব্রহ্মসত্য ।

যে কিছু মাগিবি কাণ্ড তাই দিব তথা ॥

—ঘনরামের ধর্মমঙ্গল ।

³ সত্বর কুঞ্জর পীঠে উঠে করে ভর ।

দেখে পরাক্রম লথেকে বলে ধর ধর ॥

মেলা টাঙ্গি ফেলায়ে কাণ্ডার হানে শির ।

মাথার সহিত নিল স্বামীর শরীর ॥

—ঘনরামের ধর্মমঙ্গল ।

Hospitality was considered to be one of the highest of human virtues. The duties of a host were held to be sacred and any violation of them was thought to be sacrilegious.

The host would do anything to propitiate his guest. Even the sacrifice of his life was not too dear a price to purchase the satisfaction of his guest. In fact, the spirit of the dictum *সর্বদেবময়োহতিথিঃ* was over-estimated in this period of our history. The story of Karna's killing his own son, Brishaketu, to win the satisfaction of his Brahman-guest may have originated in the very age, which was characterised by a distinct and dominant spirit of renunciation and self-sacrifice. In this fable, the idea of charity and other hospitable virtues has been strained too far. The thrilling story of the execution of Prince Luichandra of the Buddhistic age bears a striking similarity to this legend. Here is an extract from the account of Luichandra's death :—

¹ "I do not require any other meat" said the Sannyāsin, "save that of a human being." He also said "You will be very sorry to hear that I want to eat the flesh of your son Luichandra. O Madanā, see that you do not weep when you dress and cook the meat of your own elder son. I will eat the curry, thus prepared, with great relish." This hideous request shocked the parents of the prince; it stunned them for a moment. The King, however, did not shrink back. In a moment he made up his mind and took a sharp-edged sword in his hand, and killed his beloved lad before the image of the god Dharma."²

¹ সন্ন্যাসী বলেন বৃথা মাংস নাহি চাই ।

খাই যে মনের মত মহামাংস পাই ॥

সন্ন্যাসী বলেন শুনে হইবে কাতর ॥

পাছে পুত্র ভোজনে মদনা মিছে কান্দ ।

বড় ব্যাটা লুইশচন্দ্র কেটে কুটে রাঙ্গ ॥

সেই মাংস ভোজন করিব আমি স্থখে ।

বোল শুনি শেল বাজে মা বাপের বৃকে ॥

—ঘনরামের ধর্মমঙ্গল, পৃ: ৩৪ ।

² সাধুর সাহস শুনি খড়্গ নিল হাতে ।

পুত্রের বলি দেন রাজা ধর্মের সাক্ষাতে ॥—ঘনরামের ধর্মমঙ্গল পৃ: ৩৫

Then, again, stories are not wanting in our old literature, in which God Himself is described as coming down to the earth in the guise of a human being to test the spirit of hospitality among men. The excesses in which the imagination of the people delighted to revel, in connection with the above virtue, were responsible for the invention of these stories, intended evidently to celebrate the triumph of the virtue of hospitality. People were so greatly fascinated by exaggerated pictures of this virtue that they failed to condemn such a conception as monstrous and inhuman. Hence it is, that the story of Dātā-Karna narrated in various forms, is to be found in abundance in the pages of old Bengali manuscripts that have been handed down to us.

It will now be evident that virtuous deeds were given a higher place than abstract faith. The distribution of rice ¹ to the poor and the excavation of tanks for public use are highly praised in the Dāker Vachan, but no where in these aphorisms there is a line calling upon the house-holder to recite the name of God,—a point seldom forgotten in the literature of the Renaissance.

II. Theories of Creation.

The cosmogonical doctrines of the Dharma cult may be traced to a very ancient age—the period of the Vedas. The speculation about the origin of the Universe is based on a text of the Rigveda running thus :—

“Nor aught, nor naught existed then, not the aerial space nor heaven’s bright roof. Above what covered all? Where rested all? Was it water, the profound abyss?”

“Death was not then, nor immortality. There was no difference of day and night. That one breathed breathless of life (*i. e.* existed but without exerting or manifesting itself) and there was nothing other than it.

“In the beginning there was darkness in darkness unfolded. All was undistinguishable water. That one that lay in the empty space wrapped in nothingness was developed by the powers of heat (or penance).

¹ অন্ন বিন্ন নাহি দান ।

ইহার পর ধর্ম নাহি আন ॥—ডাকের বচন, ধর্মপ্রেরণ ।

"Desire first arose in it. That was primeval germ in mind; which poets reaching with their intellect discovered in their hearts to be the bond between Being and not-Being.

"A ray of light which stretched across these did it come from below or from above? Then seeds were sown and mighty forces arose and nature beneath and power and forces above.

"Who indeed knows? Who proclaimed it here? Whence was the creation produced? The Gods were later than its production. Who knows whence it sprang?

"He from whom this creation sprang whether he made it or not; the all-seer in the highest heaven, he knows it or does not." ¹—Muir.

The Sunya Purān evidently follows the same theory.

"There was no line, no form, no colour and no sign.

"The sun and the moon were not, nor day, nor night.

"The earth was not, nor water, nor sky.

"The mounts Meru, Mandara and Kailāsa were not.

"The creation was not, nor were there gods, nor men.

"Brahmā was not, nor was Vishnu, nor the etherial regions.

"Heaven and earth were not; all was emptiness.

"The presiding gods of the ten directions were not.

"Nor were there the clouds, nor stars.

"Life was not, nor death, nor pangs of deaths.

"The Lord moved in the void, supporting Himself on the void." etc. ²

III. Common features in Buddhist and Hindu-Tāntrikism and in the Dharma cult.

Dr. Kern thus refers to the Tāntrik element in Buddhism: ³

"The doctrines of Buddhism in India from the eighth century downwards nearly coincides with the growing influence of Tāntrikism and sorcery which stand to each other in the relation of theory to practice. The development of Tāntrikism is a feature that Buddhism and Hinduism in their later stages have in common. Examples of austerities and mortification of the flesh which the

¹ See Rigveda, 10, 129.

² Dr. Sen's History of Bengali Language and Literature, pp 32-33 and the Sunya Purān by Rāmāi Pandit.

³ See Kern's Manual, p. 133.

Tāntriks had adopted are found in the literature of the Dharma Cult. The following passage, for example, may be quoted from Ghanarām :

“Oh Lord, do please grant me the boon of a son or, else I shall give up my life at the stake” said queen Ranjāvati. She then offered Arghya to the God Dharma before proceeding to carry out her dreadful resolve. And when meditating upon the great God she suddenly dropped down on the floor, sustaining injuries all over her person and began to bleed. It was now believed that she was dead. Those who witnessed the scene were deeply moved and even the God in heaven could not remain unaffected by this tragic occurrence.”¹

Again the story of Prince Lāusen's austerities may be cited as another example. Says Harihar Bāity,² “My duty is to announce the sun-rise by a beat of drums in the southern gate on the bank of the Hākanda. I saw the sun rising in the west. The miracle performed by prince Lāusen cost him his life, as he cut off his head with his own hands and placed it on a triangular framework of wood.

- ১ একপুলে দান মোরে দেহ পরাংপর ।
নতুবা পরাণ ত্যজি শালে দিয়া ভর ॥
পুনর্বার অর্ঘ্য দিয়ে ধ্যায় ধর্মরূপ ।
ঝুপ করে ঝাঁপ দিতে শব্দ উঠে ঝুপ ॥
বুকে পিঠে ফুটে শাল পিঠে হল ফার ।
ঝলকে ঝলকে মুখে উঠে রক্ত ধার ॥
হাহাকার করে দেখ বত ভক্তগণ ।
দেবতা সবার স্বর্গে টলিল আসন ॥
জীবন ত্যজিল রাণী করে ছটফট ।
চাপায়ের ঘাটে বড় ঘড়িল সঙ্কট ॥—ঘনরামের ধর্মমঙ্গল পৃ: ৪৩-৪৪ ।

- ২ দক্ষিণ দ্বারে আমি দিতাম ধুমল ।
পশ্চিমে উদয় হলো হাকণ্ডের কুল ॥
লাউসেন নিয়ম করিল নবখণ্ড ।
ত্রিকাঠা উপরে কেটে দিয়াছিলো মূণ্ড ॥
বারুজন ভক্ত মৈল ষাদশ আমিনী ।
এই সত্য ধর্ম কথা এই আমি জানি ॥—মাণিক গাঙ্গুলীর ধর্মমঙ্গল,

Twelve other devotees and the same number of Aminis (priestesses) also sacrificed their lives to please the god Dharma."

The feats of miracle exhibited by the Tāntriks were quite a peculiar feature, in this age (from the 8th to 12th century). In 'Mānikchandra Rājār Gān' we find Maynāmati¹ described as remaining in fire for seven days and nights and yet coming out unscathed in the end. Even her garments were not burnt. Krittivāsa and Kāsidās, in their earlier recensions of the epics, introduced these elements as they were prevalent in an earlier age and could not possibly exclude them from their version, though they were themselves poets of the Renaissance period. In the Bengali Mahābhārat we find Sudhanwā described to have remained in burning oil for days and nights without being burnt. In the Bengali Rāmāyana, again, we find Rāvana cutting off, one after another, his ten heads to propitiate the goddess Durgā.

The sorceries, played by Mahirāvan are well-known. Hanumāna becomes a fly and whispers his message to the goddess. These do not certainly form a part of the original epic of Vālmiki. These Tāntrik elements are the distinguishing features of the pre-Renaissance literature.

When Tāntrikism took a deep root in the country it was believed that man was superior to gods, which was, however, quite a contrary belief current in the Paurāṇic period. The idea of salvation through individual efforts was so much emphasised in Tāntrikism that a man's power was considered almost unlimited, provided he could pass through austerities, prescribed in the different Tantras. In Nāthism, which borrowed largely from the Mahāyāna Buddhists, we find gods trembling before men and hastening to execute their commands. Even a woman like Maynāmati compelled the gods to obey her. "Maynāmati filliped her fingers (producing a sound tuḍu, tuḍu) and all the ascetics appeared before her. Goraksanāth who could take any shape he desired, came along in a chariot, known as the Puspa-Rath. The sage Nārada came riding his

¹ সাত দিন নও রাইত ময়না অনলের ভিতর ।

পুড়িতে পোড়া না যায় পরিধানের কাপড় ॥

—মানিকচন্দ্র রাজার গান ।

celebrated "Dheki" (wooden rice-husker) followed by the god Siva, who came on his favourite bull. The brothers Rām and Lakshman reached there with their bows and arrows and the five Pāndavas followed them. Many other sages, also came down to the spot."¹

Even death, the dread of all living beings, is said to have been conquered by the Tāntriks; thus we find Maynāmati defying death on the strength of her mystic knowledge, the 'Mahā-Jnāna.'

Yama, the god of death, fled from his own court at the mere sight of queen Maynā. The disgrace which the Godā-Yama, a messenger, of the king of death is described to have been subjected to by Maynāmati is a wild feat of imagination showing that according to the Dharma cult, one could make one's personality dreaded even by the most dreaded of gods. In the course of her pursuit of Godā-Yama, the transfiguration (which both of them underwent) was the result of acquisition of that power which is ascribed to Tāntrikism. In the European Folk-literature too, we meet with similar stories.²

"Godā-Yama became bewildered at this, and changed himself into a carp. The queen transformed herself into a water-fowl and began to beat the carp with her wings. Godā-Yama, thereupon, changed himself into a shrimp, and the queen became a gander and searched out the shrimp from under the water. Godā-Yama next

তুড়ু তুড়ু করিয়া ময়না হুঙ্কার ছাড়িল ।
যত মুনিগণকে হুঙ্কারে নামাইল ॥
পুষ্পরথে গোরথ বিস্তাধর ।
ঢেকি বাহনে নামিল নারদ মুনিবর ॥
বাসোয়ার পিঠিত নামিল ভোলা মহেশ্বর ।
ধনুকবাণে নামিলেন শ্রীরাম লক্ষণ ॥
পাঁচ ভাই পাণ্ডব নামিল ঠাক্রি ঠাক্রি ।
যত শত মুনি নামিল তার লেখাবোধ্য নাই ॥

—মাণিকচন্দ্র রাজার গান ।

¹ See Mabinogion Vol. III, Taliesin, p. 354. See also Sen's Folk-literature of Bengal, pp. 1-15.

flew up in the air in the shape of a dove, but the queen changed herself into a hawk and pursued the dove.”¹

“The pursuit is continued for a long time till Godā-Yama metamorphosed himself into a Vaisnava saint and sat, in an assembly of holy mendicants of that order. The queen changing herself into a fly, took her seat on the head of the saint. Here Godā-Yama is caught by Maynāmati and becomes her captive.”

The Sādhu Gorakshanāth, conquered death and could make the impossible happen at his will. When Maynāmati being forced to ascend her husband's funeral pyre, prayed to Gorakshanāth for her rescue the latter at once appeared before her and blessed her in the following terms, “Go, Maynā, home. You will not be burnt by fire—you

১ ঐটে হৈতে গোদা যম দিশাহারা হৈল ।
ছে ফলা মংগু হইয়া জলত ভাসিবার লাগিল ॥
ওরূপ থুইল ময়না একতর করিয়া ।
পান কাউড়ি জানোয়ার হইল মুরত বদলাইয়া ॥
পাথার সাটনে নি যায় পিটিয়া ।
মধ্য দরিয়ায় গোদা যমক ধরিল ঠেকাইয়া ॥
ঐত গোদা যম আটিয়া বজ্জর ।
ডেকেয়া ফেলাইয়া ময়নাক দিল লহড় ॥
ঐটে হৈতে গোদা যম কোন কাম করিল ।
গচি মজ্জু হয় কাদাত মিশাইল ॥

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রাজহংস হইয়া কাদা ঝারিতে ঝারিতে গোদা যমক নিয়ায় পিটিয়া ।
মধ্য দরিয়াত গোদা যমক ধরিল ঠাসিয়া ॥

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ঘরানী কৈতর হৈয়া স্বর্গে উড়ে গেল ।
শিকিরাবাজ হৈল ময়না মুরত বদলাইয়া ॥
আকাশ হইতে গোদা যমক ফেলাইল টানিয়া ॥

—মাণিকচন্দ্র রাজার গান ।

will rather feel as cold as in the depth of winter, when you sit on the burning pyre.”¹

When Rājā Govinda Chandra objected to taking a sweeper for his guru, his mother Maynāmati reproached him thus,² “The Hāḍi (Hāḍi Siddhā) does not belong to this country, he comes from East Bengal. He has made the sun and the moon his ‘Kundalas’ or ear-rings. Indra, the King of gods, waves the ‘Chāmar’ at his bidding. The Hāḍi cooks his meal in the disc of the moon and serves it on the back of the tortoise which supports the earth (the second incarnation of the god Vishnu). Lakshmi herself cooks meal for him. The five nymphs of Indra’s heaven play at chess with him and the serpent girl of the nether regions is ready with *silims* of tobacco when he desires a smoke. The goddess Subachani prepares betels for him and Meghnā Kumār, the son of Yama, fans him. He

‘যাও যাও ময়না তোমাক দিহু বর ।

মাথ মাসিয়া জাড় লাগিবে অনলের ভিতর ॥

—মাণিকচন্দ্র রাজার গান ।

²এ দেশিয়া হাড়ি নয় বঙ্গদেশে বর ।

চাঁদ সুর্য রাথছ দুই কাণের কুণ্ডল ॥

আপনি ইন্দ্ররাজা ঢুলাএ চামর ।

চন্দ্রের পৃষ্ঠে আন্ধে বাড়ে কুরুমের পৃষ্ঠে থাএ ।

আপনি মাও লক্ষ্মী রত্নই করি দেএ ॥

ইন্দ্রপুরের পাঁচ কড়া ছয়াপতি খেলায় ।

পাতালের নাগকড়া তামাকু যোগায় ॥

শুভচনী বাড়ে গুয়া হাড়িপা বসি থাএ ।

যমের বেটা মেঘনা কুমার পাড়খা ঢুলাএ ॥

চান্দে পৃষ্ঠে রাঁধে হাড়ি কুর্শের পৃষ্ঠে থায় ।

সোণার খড়ম পাএ দিয়া দরিয়া বেড়ায় ॥

দরিয়া বেড়াইতে যদি যমের লাগল পাএ ।

চিলাচাঁপ দিয়া যমক তিনপরে কিলেএ ॥

মারিয়া লরিয়া যমক করুণা শিখায় ।

হেন সাধ্য নাই যমের পলাইয়া যায় ॥

—ময়নামতীর গান ।

crosses big rivers with sandals on, and if he ever meets the lord of death, he keeps beating him for hours together when he, the terror of the world, learns how to cry helplessly like a child."

The most degenerated forms of Tāntrikism once held the society in its grip as will be evident from the description of Rājā Govindachandra's boiling his own mother in an oil-vat to test her supernatural powers. Rājā Govindachandra had a very big fire-place constructed and a monstrous vat weighing sixty maunds was placed on it by Khetu. The vat contained oil weighing eighty maunds. Teak wood was used as fuel and the froths that bubbled up on the surface of the oil were repeatedly removed. Thus for seven days and nights the oil was kept constantly boiling. On the seventh day no more froths could be seen.¹

Into this vat the queen was thrown by the order of her son. These miracles and sorceries form the very back-bone of popular Tāntrikism which is characterised by extravagant fancy and not less by the most monstrous atrocities.

The Paurānik god Siva held a unique position in Tāntrikism. He was revered by the Tāntrik Buddhists and the Hindus alike and figured in the latter day Buddhism of Bengal as a diety next only to Buddha in importance. But the Nātha cult which assimilated some of the essentials of Buddhism, gives a very high place to Siva. In Goraksha Vijaya examples are not rare to prove this. Still, however, the great god trembles in fear at the mention of Maynāmati

তোক বলো ভাইয়া খেতু বাক্য মোর ধর ।
তাতাইলা পাতাইলা চৌকা নেও বল আরোপিয়া ॥
তিনটা নারিকেলের ফল তেহিরা থিচিয়া ।
যাইট মণ কড়াই দিল চৌকায় চড়াইয়া ॥
আনীমণ তৈল দিল কড়াইল চড়াইয়া ।
শালকাটে আগুন দিল শুলকাইয়া ॥
উপরের ছাবনী মারিল ভুলিয়া ।
সাতদিন পর্যন্ত আল দেয় নিদম করিয়া ॥
একদিন ছুইদিন পঞ্চদিন হইল ।
সাতদিন অন্তরত ছাবনী উঠাইল ॥

—মাণিকচন্দ্র রাজার গান ।

on account of the '*Mahā-jnāna*' acquired by her by means of tantrik practices. He is described as having said to the subjects of King Mānikchandra, "Do not divulge my name to Maynāmati, for if you do so, she will destroy my Kailāsa."¹

It seems that Tāntrikism was so much prevalent in society that however much abstruse the cult may have now become it was more or less understood even by the illiterate country-folk in the 9th and 10th centuries. All the works, dealing with that epoch, are full of references to this cult. The conversation of Siddhā Goraksha-nāth with his Guru Minanāth, as found in Goraksha-vijaya, illustrates this point. The language of the passage is simple but the mystic import that it bears is a perfect puzzle to lay men unacquainted with the rudiments of the Yoga practices. I give below an extract.²

The powers acquired by Tāntrik practices are thus classified by Hemchandra who lived in the 14th century and compiled a Jaina version of the Rāmāyana. Rāvana is said to have acquired miraculous powers by Tāntrik tapasyā.

- ¹ মোর কথা কন যদি ময়নার বরাবর ।
কৈলাস ভুবন মোর কৈরী লওতও ॥
- ² প্রথমে কহিবা গুরু কায়া পরিচয় ।
কায়া কোথা হৈতে পাইলা কাহাতে উদয় ॥
দ্বিতীএ কহিবা গুরু এ তহু কারণ ।
অজপা কাহারে বলি জপে কোন জন ॥
তৃতীয়েতে পঞ্চশব্দী বাজে ঘরীআলী ।
কহিয়া দেয়ত মোরে করিয়া আকলী ॥
চতুর্থে ত্রিহাটের কহিবা কথন ।
কহিবা সকল তব মীন মহাজন ॥
পঞ্চমে কহিবা কথা ঘন পার তালী ।
কহি দেও এই তব তোমাকে জে বলি ॥
ষষ্ঠে কহিয়া দেও প্রভুর বিচার ।
কেমন মন্দিরে থাকে কি রূপ তাহার ॥
সপ্তমে কহিবা কথা সসারের সার ।
ওরু তুমি কোন জন শিষ্ট হও কার ॥ ইত্যাদি ।

—গোরকবিজয়, পৃ: ১৮২-১২৫ ।

IV. The growth of the Bhakti element.

The gradual decadence of Buddhism and the consequent revival of Hinduism brought about a marked change in the life of our society. Gradually the devotional element began to predominate over the Karmavāda or the principle of action. Devotion or 'Bhakti' which is the essential characteristic of the Renaissance period had gradually begun to find favour with the Mahāyāna school¹ during the declining days of Buddhism.

Examples of devotional element in the Paurāṇik Renaissance period are not rare. Thus in the Vaisnava literature we find a canon to the effect that a man can hardly commit sins, however great, during his whole life which cannot be expiated by reciting the name of God only once. The mere recitation of the name of God was considered equivalent to any sort of 'Yoga' or 'tapasyā' in this Kaliyuga. Even in the earliest days of the Saiva-cult, the element of devotion was a recognised feature.

There are lines in the Sunya Purāṇ by Rāmāi Pandit in which the God Siva is advised by the devotee to take recourse to agriculture to earn His livelihood. In these lines the devotee appears to be so much influenced by an exuberance of devotion that he forgets his own self and feels a compassionate pain for the sad plight of his Lord in which he imagines him to be.

In this devotional age men believed too much in the efficacy of prayer. The position of the Brahmans was however, an exception to this. The Brahmans claimed equality with the gods, nay, sometimes a superior status. He was called "Bhudeb" or the god on earth for the extraordinary powers he possessed. We read the following in Kācidās bearing upon the subject :—"It is the Brahman whose anger destroyed the clan of the Yadus—it is he, whose anger effaced the progeny of King Sāgara, it is he, whose anger stigmatised the god moon, it is he whose ire made the sea-water saline, it is he whose wrath made the fire omnivorous, it is he whose anger made the body of god Indra spotted." All other castes trembled before the gods and the Brahmans. In one or two instances

¹ As for instance the Dohās of Kānupāda. See Sāstri's "Bouddha-gān O Dohā" pp. 123-132. See also its introduction, specially pp. 6-8.

such as the cases of Durbāsā and Bhrigu, the Brahmans even dared declare themselves superior to the gods. Durbāsā cursed Indra for which he lost his sovereignty over heaven for sometime and the sage Bhrigu is said to have kicked the God Vishnu on the breast. But these instances are rare. In the Paurānik period people did not learn to rely on their own strength but to depend, for everything, on the grace of gods and Brahmans. This spirit of absolutely slavish and soul-killing dependence naturally weakened the Bengali character. But, as has already been noticed, the mentality of the people belonging to the earlier period, when stress was laid on self-culture and development of ethical virtues was quite different. The conception of such characters as the merchant Chānd, Lāu Sen, and others in the earlier period bears testimony to the stamina of the Bengali character. The bold female characters of the Pre-renaissance age cannot but evoke our admiration. Lakhā had to be tied down by her husband Kālu lest she should prevent him from carrying out his resolve of self-destruction. But in the latter age these characters as recast by the Brahmans in conformity with the pervading spirit of the Renaissance, suffered the loss of their moral grandeur to a great extent. A heroic character, such as Sitā, whom Vālmiki invests with queen-like grandeur sinks to the level of common woman at the hands of Krittivāsa and the poets of his school. When Rama unjustly suspects her, she cries like a helpless weakling and scarcely shews that majestic unconcern which we find in Vālmiki's original.

The male characters underwent even a greater transformation. In the place of Hādisiddhā or Gorakshanāth whose powers were even felt by the gods, we see Rāmchandra himself, an incarnation of Vishnu praying to the goddess Durgā like a helpless child in his contests with Rāvana. To a devotee divine help was never refused in times of need.

Thus we find in the Chandikāvya :—

“Chandi descended from her place in heaven into the prison of Kālketu. When the goddess saw the hero in chains, she became quite ashamed of herself. When Kālketu saw the goddess before him, he made a reverential bow with tearful eyes. Then Chandi

removed the heavy stone from the hero's breast and also broke the shackles which bound him."¹

In another instance the same goddess vouchsafed a boon to the merchant Chandradhar of the Manasāmangal poems and "instantly the shackles gave way and the merchant was saved."

In the cases of other gods and goddesses we find similar instances of kindly intervention in favour of devoted votaries.

As the ideas of the Paurānik age took root in the minds of the people, they became quite helpless in every matter and looked to supernatural agency for relief on every occasion.

Signs, symbols and sorceries held their sway upon popular mind, and self-dependence and manly energy became wellnigh extinct.

But in the Renaissance period, men became accustomed to resignation which is certainly a great spiritual virtue and the evils of Tāntrikism gradually passed away. The lives of people became more and more regulated by rules of abstinence and other passive virtues. The flowering point of the Renaissance culture was reached in the extraordinary development of Bhakti amongst the Vaisnavas. The age preceding the Brāhmanic revival had no place for the culture of faith, but the influence of Islam was clearly perceptible in the Renaissance cults in the form of a belief in a personal and anthropomorphic God. In the place of impersonal nature of worship leading men to identify themselves with God (সোহহৃদ্), the Renaissance cults distinctly laid a stress on faith in personal gods. In however crude a form, this faith was recognised, the followers of Sakti cult believed their deities to watch and guard their devotees, driving their enemies away and protecting them from all danger with almost the same ardour with which the followers of Islam believed in the intervention of God in their struggles and conflicts with the Kafers.

¹ See Kavikankan's Chandikāvya p. 105.

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